

**THE INTERNATIONAL
CROSBY CIRCLE** PRESENTS

BING



Edited by **REG BRISTO**

no 61



BING

"In one US personality poll of the 1940's, he was rated as the most popular, beating out General Dwight Eisenhower, President Harry Truman and the Pope....no one was named more often."

(American tribute at time of his passing).

WHO DID MORE FOR POPULAR SINGING THAN ANY OTHER MAN

....and not even a thousand books, scurrilous or otherwise, especially those by people who never knew him, can alter such things.....

But it may explain why, in these sick times, attempts are made to denigrate this great man. There are those who just cannot endure to see respect and admiration; they feel they just HAVE to try and tear it all apart.
Really, they need sympathy.

BOB HOPE

WHO BETTER - WHO ELSE ?

After a press conference in early May, and under the heading:

BING WAS A SWELL GUY...

the New York press reported, among other topics, Bing's long-time partner and associate, as follows:

What about the recent spate of bad press about Bing Crosby?

"Listen, those two guys who wrote the book...did they even know him?"

What about Bing's son's criticism?

"People do things for money, you know."

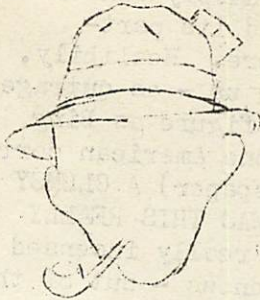
Were he and Bing just business associates or really pals?

"WE WERE PALS. BELIEVE ME. AND LISTEN, AFTER ALL THIS STUFF, IT'S DANGEROUS EVEN TO DIE."

In a lifetime of a million jokes, wisecracks, quips, clearly Bob Hope, with that last sentence, uttered a most sagacious and pertinent comment on certain cynical aspects of the age in which we are living.

IT'S DANGEROUS TO DIE.....THE JACKALS
ARE WAITING....

Dedicated to the imperishable memory of the one
and only Bing.



Annual Subscription: £2.50 UK; European members equivalent to £3.00 sterling; Australian sterling equivalent of £5.00 for airmail posting, £4.00 surface mail; American/Canadian 12 dollars airmail, 8 dollars surface mail. Note these rates and adhere, please, fluctuating exchange rates are a continual headache - and land us in the RED! Also, prompt renewal of subs when indicated by the "X" obviously helps us to carry on our work dedicated to Bing.

Tape/Disc Consultants:

BERT BISHOP, Tideway, Imperial
Aven., Maylandsea, Chelmsford, Essex.
JOHN BASSETT, Bingville, 15 Oast Way,
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TRADING POST &C.

The contents may be liable to the slightest of alterations...regret, due to a reshuffle, page 40 is not so numbered.....Details of Leeds dinner, 27th September, on Page 19..... that para. on page 32: it might be worthwhile for Aussie members to get in touch with the National Library to see if there is any chance of issuing the old radio shows rescued from Davy Jones Locker..... When you've read of the heavy involvement of Crosby Enterprises in the development of recording tape its amusing to think that, nearly 30 years later on sending a message to us at Leeds, Bing confessed he wasn't sure how to work (Harry's) tape-recorder!

Quite a summer, one way and another. When it came, that is! Just when we had dismissed our English cricketers they brightened the whole country - and re-wrote the history books! Our Aussie members won't appreciate that, but they've rubbed our noses in it often enough! And the Bing records continue to turn up - in places - Crosby films turn up on TV... records on radio....the legacy is being used, as we knew it would be. Our membership remains strong and enthusiastic...so what are we worrying about? Economic situation.....ugh! Did you HAVE to mention that?

"My favourite Bing record? The one I'm listening to at any moment..... I'm a bit old to call myself a fan but I'm sure there are thousands of people who listen to Bing - and it brings back a whole host of memories..."
JOHN JONES in a splendid interview on Downtown Radio in Northern Ireland.

EDITORIAL!



Understandably, most members were sharply concerned over the book THE HOLLOW MAN and its partial serialisation in a newspaper here. Healthily, that concern has been expressed - to us - as outrage; disgust even that such a well-loved figure as Bing Crosby should be the victim of (as one American correspondent put it in a Stateside newspaper) A CLUMSY HATCHET JOB. No-one said: OH DEAR! WAS THIS REALLY BING? Significantly. One or two got really incensed and wanted us to re the writers and the newspapers! Madness - out of the question. Even the 'family' would shrink from that. With even .001 per cent of the truth in certain innuendoes, all that could result would be a protracted, indeterminate, case that would become the goose that laid the golden egg. For the legal profession!

Another one wrote a lengthy 'answer' to the book and its vicious assumptions. But we feel that anyone who reads BING - more than that, who has paid attention to Bing's incredible career and feels that Bing needs 'defending' they should not be in the Circle!

Bing needs defence from no-one. And, lest it be felt that this adopts an ostrich-like attitude we say, here and now, that we have never considered Mr. Crosby a candidate for sainthood. We have considered him a uniquely talented, charming, and generous man. "But the book has been WRITTEN," says this member. One asks: WHY was it written? A string of gross exaggerations and distortions, invariably told by "a friend of the family" or "a man working at Paramount" - and so on. Nothing precise or documented. The 'authors' were too smart for that. And, in truth, Bing dealt with all the allegations in CALL ME LUCKY. His difficulty in bringing up four boys in the face of his unprecedented career and the pressure of constant publicity; drinking, how he came to be in France when Dixie died; how he believed a degree of strictness was necessary in shaping family upbringing and so on. And, in passing, we place more reliance on an AUTOBIOGRAPHY than we do an imaginary BIOGRAPHY. The object of the book, surely, is: Money! Sensationalism - and that obnoxious facet of life today which just longs to try and 'destroy' images. And the more respected those images the better for those who pursue this line. And of course, it is essential that when writing such vilifications you wait until the victim is safely dead.

It was often said in Bing's lifetime that despite living in the tinsel-like environment of Hollywood, and the aforementioned pressures of his tremendous success (surrounded, incidentally, by the world's loveliest women) rumour, gossip, scandal never touched Bing Crosby. Now these 'authors' blandly assert that all their vicious allegations never came to light because of Bing's enormous influence. Balderdash - preposterous balderdash. Hollywood had real experts who dedicated their lives to 'digging the dirt' (their expression) and it was their profession, relentlessly followed. Could anyone silence them? American Presidents, even, have found they cannot.

By analysing, and certainly be answering these 'allegations' we would merely be doing precisely what those authors want. Publicising and seeming to take their efforts seriously. WE'LL HAVE NONE OF IT. A 100 pernicious diatribes of this nature could not detract one whit from any of the millions of melodious notes Bing sang; nor from his delightful 'escapist' films, or the hundreds of radio shows which always exhibited spontaneous honhomie. The true story, and the legacy, is there..... for ever.

HIS MUSIC IS FOR EVERYONE

By John Salisbury

"I THINK IT'S a beautiful work on the part of a lovely young girl. However, I think you in radio have done the kind of memorial that Bing loved. His voice is on tape, his records are for people to hear, his music is for everyone."

Kathryn Crosby made that obser-

JOHN SALISBURY is executive director for news and public affairs on KXL-AM/FM, and produced two series of programs with Bing for the station.

vation to me shortly after she unveiled the 10½ foot bronze statue of her late husband and Gonzaga University's most famous alumnus, Harry Lillis "Bing" Crosby. The date was May 3, 1981, and the likeness of the Old Groaner stands now in the forecourt of the Crosby Library, for which the singer donated the funds. The library was dedicated Nov. 3, 1957. Crosby died of a heart attack Oct. 14, 1977.

Kathryn was referring to the two series with Bing on KXL: "The Crosby Years," a 39-week series covering his life from his birth in 1903 through 1974, and "Fifty Fabulous Years,"

covering his recording career from 1926 to 1976. The former series was presented as a gift to the Crosby Library in 1975, and on the occasion of the unveiling KXL presented the final 26-hour series to the library. For these reasons, I was invited to Spokane for the ceremonies at Gonzaga.

Also present was Bing's good friend and companion, Phil Harris, who had previously donated volumes containing the complete scripts of "The Jack Benny Show" on which Harris appeared for several seasons.

"Bing was one of a kind," Phil told me. "I think the reason we remained



Associated Press

Cont. from previous page)

friends for so long was that we liked the same things. I can't remember our ever talking business."

During his lifetime, Crosby had often been called a 'loner' - a designation he vehemently disowned. But Harris said that, in fact, Crosby was.

"He was actually a loner, if you stop to figure it out," Harris said. "He had millions of people who loved him, he was the most fortunate man in the world, but if you followed Bing closely, other than his family, he didn't fraternize much. He liked to be alone, and we hit it off because I liked to be alone, too."

Crosby and Harris were fishing and hunting buddies, and Harris admitted that he had not done either since Crosby died. Harris, who like Crosby is light generations away from the current student body at Gonzaga, royally entertained those present at the ceremony with tales of escapades in which he and Bing participated. He held his own very well with comedian-impressionist Rich Little, undoubtedly the favourite personality with the students.

Little presented some of his impressions of "guests who couldn't make it," such as President Reagan and former Presidents Nixon, Carter and Ford. Little appeared with Crosby in some of the crooner's domestic concerts in 1976-77, and Bing had been a guest on Little's television show.

"He didn't have to do that," Little said. "He came down from San Francisco and worked every day in the studio, and was just terrific to work with."

Little and Harris performed again that evening at the gala banquet which followed the unveiling.

Another celebrity present for the occasion was songwriter Jimmy Van Heusen who, with lyricist Johnny Burke, wrote the songs for Bing's Academy Award-winning film "Going My Way", and many other Crosby vehicles.

Van Heusen made no bones about it: "Bing's the finest singer who ever lived."

The Memorial to Bing is the work of, as Kathy Crosby noted, "a lovely young girl". Deborah Copenhaver of Spokane called Gonzaga University immediately upon hearing of Bing's death in October 1977 and told the Jesuit priests she wanted to do a bronze memorial for the singer. She had never met Crosby, but she enjoyed his music and admired him from afar.

At the unveiling, Deborah said that the work was an inspired and spiritual experience for her.

She told the Spokane Review, in a 1978 interview, that she didn't know at first what kind of memorial she wanted to do.

"My thought was to let the priests know I was interested and willing to do something for their most illustrious alumnus."

Cont. →

The principle figure in the project became the Rev. Arthur L. Dussault, S.J., vice president of the university. He guided her throughout the creation of the statue and campaigned for the funds by which to accomplish it. Dussault, a long-time friend and fellow classmate of Bing's, suggested that miniatures of Deborah's creation be sold to help raise the money. Some 35 have been sold at 1,200 dollars apiece.

Rev. Bernard Coughlin, S.J., president of Gonzaga, joined Dussault in advising Miss Copenhaver on what form the statue should take.

"We tossed several ideas around, knowing only that we did not want an heroic type monument," he said. "Deborah finally suggested she develop an idea in miniature for us to look at."

Debbie, as her friends call her, eventually developed a full figure of Crosby in a casual pose which she felt epitomized everything she had seen of him - hat on his head, pipe in his mouth and golf clubs at his feet.

"Those were his trademarks," she said.

The trademarks are there, and the 50,000 dollar bronze statue is probably the best reflection of Bing that could have been cast in bronze. It is, perhaps, in its size, a more heroic likeness than fits the modest mold into which Crosby cast himself, but as he gazes out over the campus, he does seem to be searching for an errant golf ball rather than sternly suggesting, by his presence, that the Crosby Library is for study.

Debbie's statue, she said, was a labor of love, but she was realistic enough to know that not all might respect it. One of the guests at the ceremony asked her how long she thought it might be before the pipe would disappear from Bing's mouth.

"Probably no later than tonight," she replied.

She was right. The pipe vanished not once but four times! A student prank each time, and the pipe was always returned.

Oddly enough, Bing himself had given up the pipe after undergoing lung surgery in 1974.

So the bronze Crosby will stand in front of the library named for him, and in that library in the years to come students will learn of who he was and what he represented in the world of popular song as they explore the Crosbyana Room which contains recordings, tapes, memorabilia and exhibits connected with his career - and his Oscar, too.

But what will be Bing's place in the musical history of this nation in the years to come? For how long will he be remembered? How long will his recordings be played and enjoyed?

He was a son of the Pacific North-West, born in Tacoma and raised in Spokane. His great grandfather, Captain Nathaniel Crosby II, was an outstanding pioneer in Portland's beginnings. Born into a seafaring family, Captain Crosby eventu-

ally found his way aboard the American bark Toulon up the Columbia River with goods for Pettygrove's trading houses in Oregon City and Portland. Impressed by the forests and streams of the Puget Sound and Columbia River country, Captain Crosby determined to bring his family to the Pacific Northwest. In 1847, he had built the first palatial residence in Portland on the southwest corner of what is now First and Washington. So Bing had roots in Oregon, and he often talked about Grandfather Nathaniel when discoursing on his youth. One of Bing's sons, Nathaniel, is named for the ancient mariner.

When Bing emerged in the mid-20's, popular music was already changing from the parlor songs and minstrel shows of the Gay Nineties. The era of the belters was fading with the advent of radio and the microphone. The singers who inspired a youthful Crosby - Al Jolson, John McCormack and Harry Richman - were highly popular in the '20's, but as the voices of Crosby, Columbo, Vallee and Gene Austin began emanating from the growing number of radio sets, the crooning style set in. One didn't need to be loud to be heard, and the age of the romantic balladeer replaced that in which singers had to bellow to reach the back of the hall.

Austin's "My Blue Heaven" sold more than a million copies in 1927. Rudy Vallee, broadcasting from his "Heigh-Ho" Club in the late '20's was moving toward network radio and the Fleischmann Hour. Bing Crosby and Russ Columbo, singing with Gus Arnheim's band from Hollywood's Cocoanut Grove, would make their network debuts in 1931.

Among them, Crosby was the best singer by far, and anyone who thinks Russ Columbo would have been real competition for Bing, had he lived, must have a tin ear. Columbo's voice was pleasant, but he had nowhere near the personality or vocal variety that Bing possessed. As Crosby's star rose, Vallee's faded.

And somewhere along the line Bing became The Master. Almost every male singer who emerged in the 30's and 40's owed a good chunk of his success to Bing. They were not imitators, but all of them developed their own style from listening to Bing's records.

Frank Sinatra, when Bing died: "He was the father of my career...the idol of my maturity."

Tony Bennett: "My grandmother had all of Bing Crosby's records, hundreds of 'em, and I grew up listening to Bing and trying to sing like him. Bing created a culture. He contributed more to popular music than any other single person - he molded popular music."

Dean Martin: "If I could sing like Bing, how happy I would be...."

And Perry Como, on a brand new album, just released, pays tribute to Bing: "A man who I feel set the style for all of us who sing popular music. I think if it hadn't been for Bing, I'd still be cutting hair somewhere."

Others who owed Bing at least part of their careers were Dick Haymes, Buddy Clark, Nat "King" Cole, Bobby Darin, Andy Williams, Steve Lawrence, Vic Damone and Dick Todd, the only one who actually imitated Bing.



Singing bandleader Will Osborne owed something to Rudy Vallee, and perhaps Morton Downey owed something to Gene Austin. The rest were indebted to Bing.

In Manchester, England, there resides a nightclub singer named Roy Chappell who lists his performance as having "a touch of the Bings". Chappell has, indeed, a touch of the Crosby voice, although he makes no attempt directly to imitate Bing. Chappell appeared at the unveiling at Gonzaga to sing Crosby's theme, "Where the Blue of the Night Meets the Gold of the Day", and later entertained at the banquet with Harris and Little.

Chappell appeared for the first time in America at the second annual gathering of the Bing Crosby Historical Society in Tacoma, the singer's birthplace, and was there again this year for the society's third observance Saturday night, May 2, before

flyng on to Spokane. Members of the Society and Crosby fan clubs from around the world were invited as special guests to the unveiling.

Roy Chappell is popular in England because Bing was popular there. In the last few years of his life, Bing enjoyed a resurgence of his recording career and most of what he performed for the record was done in London. Although revered and respected in the United States, he was practically adopted as a favorite son by the British. His final concert appearances were made in London and Brighton, and his only "live" album was recorded during his London Palladium appearance in 1976. Ironically, his last appearance was on radio - the medium by which he climbed to stardom in the early '30's - just three days before his death. It was a BBC special devoted to Bing in which he conversed with host Alan Dell and sang a number of songs with live orchestral accompaniment. The BBC has just issued an album of that broadcast called "The Final Chapter".

Bing was by no means neglected in his own country. His television specials were among the highest rated programs, and his concert appearances, which began in earnest in 1976, drew packed houses and standing ovations.

In December 1976, he moved into the Uris Theatre in New York for a two-week stint. It was his 50th anniversary in show

Cont. →

business, and New York Times critic Clive Barnes wrote: "The man is fantastic. He is still a great singer, with a sweet, accomplished voice. I loved the performance... Of course, it was an evening of nostalgia. An evening when you watched an old man being defiantly young. But why didn't he sing 'June in January'? That was my song for Mr. Crosby, and he sang everyone else's but not mine. But I forgive because I remember. And there is nothing like a surviving pop singer to chart the patterns of your life, rough hew them as you will."

Jazz and popular music critic Henry Pleasants, writing in a Sunday edition of The New York Times that same December: "It's easy to say, it has often been said, and it's true, that there is not a popular singer today who does not owe something to Bing Crosby. Not a popular singer over 50, anyway. Younger singers owe more to Elvis Presley and the black blues, rhythm-and-blues and gospel singers of the 50's and 60's....What established Crosby as the most influential transitional figure in American popular singing was his identification with jazz, his predilection for an oratorical approach to song." And Pleasants concluded: "Art, according to the old axiom, is that which disguises art. The art of Bing Crosby has been - and still is - a glorious and delightful illustration of that axiom."

Washing Post critic Tom Shales wrote after Bing's death: "Crosby's reign outlasted all of the heirs apparent. They came, they went; they did or they didn't acknowledge what they owed him. But even when Crosby's own popularity softened and his record sales slipped, he remained somehow, somewhere, comfortingly there. He wasn't merely a star, nor merely the greatest star. He was an abiding presence."

Perhaps that statement gives us a clue as to how long Bing Crosby will be remembered. It is no good recalling that popular singing stars of the 19th century are scarcely remembered today; they were not recorded, for the most part. The few that were are etched in antique records of poor quality and questionable durability. Bing's commercial recordings over the 51-year span of his career numbered more than 1,600, most of them preserved today on good quality long play albums.

Aside from that commercial output, many of his radio shows and film soundtracks have found their way onto records and tapes, and Crosby collectors the world over have acquired almost everything the prolific singer ever did. As Kathryn Crosby noted, his voice is on tape, his records are for people to hear.

It has been 30 years since Al Jolson died, 15 years since Nat "King" Cole succumbed to cancer, and their records are still being heard on radio today. Probably Bing's will be heard 100 years from now because he was unique with his apple-pie Americanism.

I have tried, since Bing's death, to analyze what it was in

him that was so different from the quality of other popular singers. I think it was that his voice had, almost from the beginning, a mature quality which prevented him from ever becoming a truly romantic figure. Bing's songs, sung to his leading ladies, were sincere enough, but he kept the ladies at a distance. He was never the great lover. It was enough that his songs captured their hearts. In his mid- and - later years, he was, in some respects, a father figure - an average guy who raised a family, played a good game of golf and sang like a man who knew his way around a note. He sang with authority always. He seemed to be saying, "You can do it too, and here's how." It all seemed so simple. Sing like Bing in the shower.

The simplicity was deceptive. There was not and never will be another troubadour quite like him.

He will survive in our memory for as long as his recordings survive and there are radio stations to play them. Whatever the contemporary music of the future may bring, the songs of Bing Crosby had taste.

And class.

As Tom Shales wrote: "He kept his dignity even when we went to pieces, and his trademarks or habits were statements on the advisability of not getting carried away....Crosby was more natural and more listenable than any other singer. This was music blithe as friendly chatter, free of bombast or pose, direct and intimate and personal. In liberating songs from pretentious artsiness and formal cant, he ironically helped make popular song one of the greatest arts of all, all the greater for its utter accessibility - an art closed to no one. Crosby was a democratizer, an exemplary egalitarian, and he became a singing spokesman as well, a summation of American pop as well as its immaculate practitioner."

Because I came to know Bing through his generous participation in our two series of programs on KXL - and perhaps because I grew up with him in the days when he was the most popular singer in the country, I may be somewhat prejudiced, but I don't think a man like Crosby can be soon forgotten. Those who listen to our "Scrapbook in Sound" program at 6 Sunday evenings have expressed appreciation for the Bing-things we occasionally play - his songs and the excerpts from his films and radio shows. There is a loyal following out there, and I believe his place in the history of American popular music is secure.

In Spokane, on the campus in front of the Crosby Library at Gonzaga, his likeness stands casually, cast in bronze for future generations of students to admire and respect.

From time to time, one of them may play a record or a tape, listening with curiosity to the voice of a bygone age.

I think he or she will enjoy it. Immensely.

The Pacific Northwest can point with pride to this native son. His songs will survive, because he was us, we were him. Only he had the voice.

Tom Shales, I think, put it best:

"YOU COULD WARM YOUR HANDS ON THE SOUND OF HIS VOICE."

(With grateful acknowledgements and thanks to John Salisbury; this highly readable and comprehensive article appeared in the American NORTHWEST MAGAZINE of Sunday June 7 last. It may have appeared in other publications in the States. Our acknowledgements to those papers also.

As you read at the start on page 7, and as also indicated in the body of the story, John Salisbury is a prominent radio station executive and among his multifarious activities has done tremendous work on programmes featuring Bing. It will be appreciated the article contains some highly pertinent views and equally positive and trenchant opinions. And, in the process, ill Salisbury is a Crosbyophile par excellence.

John, rightly, remarked on how almost every popular singer since Bing owed something to him....it certainly applied this side of the Atlantic - and the process started here almost as quickly as it did in the States. Early in the 30's singers here such as Al Bowlly and Denny Dennis were being hailed as "Britain's Bing Crosby"; and they were not, of course, the only ones. Most dance band singers and, indeed, soloists (the latter often progressed from the former!) came under the Crosby influence culminating in probably the most remarkable Crosby admirer-impressionist of them all in the talented yet tragic person of our own Michael Holliday.

Michael was an avowed Bing imitator; made no bones about it and as he made "tribute" albums to Bing it is probable he is known in the States, too. His musical director, who guided his recording career, urged him to stop the "Bing thing", saying "Bing is still around - and there's no room yet for another!" But Mike didn't stop. His uncanny impression of Bing (capable of fooling even the top collectors) was indeed an impression. His natural voice was quite different! Michael's so-premature decease was a grievous blow.

An example of what we refer to as positive and trenchant opinions by John is where he describes anyone who felt Russ Columbo (another premature and sad decease) could have been a serious rival to Bing must have had a tin ear! We cordially agree with Mr. Salisbury. In fact, we agree with ALL he said!

And we feel confident it will provide thought-provoking reading for our members.

The picture on p. 7 at the start of the story shows the statue of Bing and the sculptress, Deborah Copenhaver with Mrs. Kathryn Crosby. And we congratulate Deborah on her labour of love. The statue appears to be a well-thought and beautifully executed work.

....TEA WITH KATHRYN

or! "I WAS THERE!"



Most people in Europe, certainly in Britain, seem to nurture a desire to cross the Atlantic and visit the New World - America! at some time in their lives.

No doubt a lot of this desire is prompted by Britain and elsewhere this side of the globe, having been, as it were, brought up on American themes - at least, those presented by Hollywood. There is no denying the colossal contribution of America to cinematic art. And it would be churlish to observe that a proportion of Hollywood's output fell short of art. The United States is, and perhaps always will be, the world's largest producer of films.

An uncorrected error on the previous page makes unintelligible reading! A third down the page it should read: "And in the process, illustrates that JOHN SALISBURY is a Crosbyophile par excellence."

Thus, we often feel we know New York and Chicago as well as its citizens; there are times, no doubt, when we feel mere ranch-hands, due to the colossal output of the old favourites, "Westerns". And let us add, it is seldom the much-maligned Westerns don't provide a rattling good film. And in a lot of cases, tremendous spectacular entertainment. Be that as it may, the tremendous dramas, such as the Biblical ones, or GONE WITH THE WIND; the fabulous 'musicals' of Busby Berkeley, Rogers-Astaire, Bing and so many others have given us a kind of kinship - and knowledge of - with America.

And most of us, especially those reading this, have an extra special kinship with the States. Because of Bing Crosby, obviously. Most want to see Bing's "country", especially Tacoma and San Francisco.....and as we described in the June issue of BING, it was a very happy circumstance that we had a contingent of such visitors to America in early May of this momentous year. They were able to not only visit the accepted locations of the Crosby saga but also to attend the annual meeting of Ken Twiss's BING CROSBY HISTORICAL SOCIETY and, as a bonus they never expected, the unveiling of the statue to Bing at Gonzaga University.



And, one feels, even those events may possibly have been just slightly nudged in estimation by the fact of being invited to tea with Kathryn Crosby!

It is certain that none of the three ladies who enjoyed this most unexpected invitation could have had the slightest inkling, when thro' the Circle, they crystallised their plans to visit Bing's birthplace. But, so it turned out. And, of course, as we related last time, they were very generously received on all sides by our American friends and organisers and made to feel welcome and honoured guests. All of which, they and we, warmly appreciated.

Additionally, they had the rare experience of



meeting the famous people who had been Bing's friends - Phil Harris and Jimmy Van Heusen among them - and the pride of hearing our own Roy Chappell provide such a musical tribute at the unveiling.

And, they met Kathryn! RENEE CHESTER (Hanwell, London) must be the one to tell the story:

I am still trying to adjust and settle down again after what proved to be a fairy-tale visit to the States - a visit which lasted four weeks.

But it began with some ill-luck, not a happy augury. The friend I set out with fell ill and indeed had to be flown back here eight days after arriving in Seattle. I was, of course, much upset about this but things certainly brightened up.

On arriving at Tacoma I was delighted to meet Pat O'Brien and Jenny Mills from Sutton (Surrey) and Vic Byne of Slough. We naturally teamed up and remained firm friends. We were extremely sorry that, despite dear old Ken Twiss's efforts, his Friday night tribute was dogged by ill-luck; in short, he was let down. Rosemary Clooney again failed to appear and there was some trouble with the sound-equipment. Not to worry, we enjoyed it and appreciated the efforts of our hosts. Roy Chappell and Teddy Joyce went a long way to repair the omissions and make it a good and friendly event.

Anyway, to come to the day of the unveiling, at 7 am - yes AM - Ken Twiss came to the Doric Hotel where we were staying to take us to Spokane. And this, would you believe, was a 7 hours' drive! Arrived there at the Cavanagh Hotel at 2pm we hurriedly had to get refreshed and changed for the ceremony - due at 3.30 - at Gonzaga University.

We got there in good time around 3pm and Pat, Jenny and I were really delighted to find we had been allocated seats very close to the statue itself and directly opposite to where Kathryn Crosby was sitting.

I won't describe the actual unveiling ceremony for you've already read about it - and probably heard the tape of the speeches &c. But after the official events we were introduced to Mrs. Crosby and I had the ideal opportunity to present to Kathryn the silver and bronze medallions I had taken in the name of the ICC. This was embossed on the blue-leather case which housed them.

Clearly, Kathryn was really delighted to receive them and was kind enough to say how happy she was to meet me for she had heard quite a lot about me! She then rather took the wind from my sails by inviting me to her home for Christmas. I was so taken aback at this that I could only murmur that it was unlikely I would be visiting the States again - at least, so soon - and that in any case, Christmas was essentially a family holiday.

Kathryn smilingly agreed but then asked me to take tea with her; in the early part of the following week. This was easy to accept, as you can imagine.

I then asked Kathryn if I might have my photograph taken with her; Pat and Jenny (both very shy ladies incidentally!) then took the pictures and in turn I reciprocated with pictures of them with Mrs. Crosby, providing us with priceless souvenirs. Then Kathryn really delighted us all by including Pat and Jenny in the invitation to tea.

Came the great day, though perhaps I should say the NEXT great day for really all the days we spent in America were great days - and we were duly picked up. On arrival the chauffeur rang the bell. We were admitted and there was Kathryn walking down the driveway to meet us.

Our first 'duty' inside the house was to sign the visitors' book under a heading of BING'S SPECIAL FRIENDS. We found this quite moving to say the least.

Well, as you already know, it really is a beautiful mansion and it was difficult to believe where we really were - in Bing's home. Kathryn readily agreed to us taking pictures and we took full advantage. As for the garden, or more accurately, the grounds they are truly magnificent.

Altogether we were there for more than two hours and you will appreciate it was a quite unforgettable experience for us all.

The next stage was a 17hours coach-ride to Los Angeles which we reached on May 10th - Jenny, Pat and myself still together.

We were making, of course, for the Holy Cross Cemetery and it seems that May 10th is Mothering Sunday in the States so the garden nurseries were fully displaying their lovely wares. Staring us in the face was just what we wanted: a beautiful spray made up of golden chrysanthemums - and blue carnations. You will appreciate the blue and gold aspect.

It was another most moving experience to stand at the side of Bing's grave....impossible to imagine that Bing has been dead for more than three years. All three of us found it a most sombre, yet in some ways, a consoling experience. I am very happy to report, too, that despite what some have said, Bing's grave is beautiful, as is Dixie's and indeed, all of the Crosby graves. And well-tended.

Four days later - the 14th May - Pat and Jenny flew back to Britain and I was left alone; but I went back to San Francisco to meet again some friends I had met thro' the Circle and the Bing club in the States. We called Priscilla Koernig, who will be well-known by name at least. Pat kindly arranged a trip that took in Pebble Beach, Monterey and Carmel. Thus I had the opportunity to see the place where Bing used to stay for his famous pro-am golf tournaments. And of special interest, I saw the home near the famous Cypress Point which Bing built for Dixie.

Correspondents of Patricia Koernig's will be interested and no doubt delighted to learn that she is coming to London in 1982 and will, in fact, time the visit for the Leeds dinner next year.

Its been said before, I know, but we cannot say it too often: and



that is to acknowledge and, indeed, to thank through the columns of BING, our American friends who did so much to make our visit so comprehensive and so enjoyable. I myself spent 29 days in the States and travelled extensively, seeing in the process everything a Bing Crosby admirer would wish to see.

Apart from the places I have described, I was also shown Bing's grandfather's home; St. Patrick's Church - and of course, the Gonzaga Library which Bing donated to his old university. This needs a book to itself!

Editor: Renee's story is graphic enough and we're pleased she took the time to 'write it up' for us - and, as she wishes, to pay tribute to our fellow Bing-fans across the Atlantic. We are certain the news that Pat Koernig is coming to Britain next year will please a lot of people.

BING ON THE BOX

Nothing more suitable than HIGH SOCIETY, we feel, could have been chosen to follow the Royal wedding! We turned over from the BBC coverage - and there was debonair Bing singing LITTLE ONE. As we have observed before, this provides a piffling story BUT - wonderful music. And no matter how many times we see this film NOW YOU HAS JAZZ remains one of the great moments of the musical screen. Full marks to ITV for this delightful surprise.

Yet on Saturday 27th June the BBC provided an even more delicious surprise! Alas, it was shown on BBC-1 at the highly unsuitable hour of 11am and we fear many of our members may have missed this glorious tit-bit. It was no less than that montage of ancient comedy films entitled DOWN MEMORY LANE, the highlights of which was the appearance of Bing in the Mack Sennett famed 'shorts'.

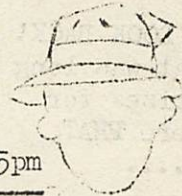
BLUE OF THE NIGHT, EVERY TIME MY HEART BEATS....wonderful songs to be heard only via these ancient soundtracks though we hastily add that - somehow - they have been spruced up to a highly acceptable level. In view of what we've just said about NOW YOU HAS JAZZ we may seem to be grossly overdoing things when we say that the sight (and sound) of Bing singing that beautiful song, AUF WIEDERSEHEN, MY DEAR, at the nightclub microphone is certainly in the 'unforgettable' category. That is the Bing Crosby that really stirs the heart for those who can remember it from 'the first time around'.....

The more one sees these Mack Sennett's (and the hindsight we admit is now 50 years!) the more obvious it is that Bing, the radio sensation, was clearly destined to be the screen sensation also. His easy relaxed manner, his sense of comedy and timing, were all there to see.....

Then we saw the start of a film, SUMMER OF MY GERMAN LOVE (!) - and the opening credits were rolled to the strains of Bing and the Andrews Sisters singing ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE!

LEEDS! LEEDS! LEEDS!

It is confirmed that the 16th Annual Dinner will be held on 27th SEPTEMBER at THE MANSION HOTEL, ROUNDHAY PARK, LEEDS



Commencing at 3pm and until 10pm (approx). Dinner @ 5pm

Programme will include:

Introductions by Michael Crampton, your host, and Reg Bristo, your Secretary.
Quiz - Films - Non-stop Crosby sounds !
Sale of Records - which will incorporate a bring and buy sale. Bring your disposals - acquire your wants!

We have resolved that this year while a 'shadow' programme has been drawn up, we will not insist on sticking to it rigidly; rather we want it to be even more of a social occasion than it has, as a matter of fact, always turned out to be. It has been apparent that friendly conversations and social get-togethers have been unnecessarily interrupted at past events by trying to maintain a timetable. It is just our desire that everyone has a good social meeting with fellow members who share their interest. For instance, there is little doubt that a large number of most interesting photographs arising from members' visits to the States will be available for viewing.

TICKETS FROM: MICHAEL CRAMPTON, 19 Carrholm Crescent, Chapel Allerton, Leeds, West Yorks, LS7 2NL and NOT from your Secretary. Sadly, the price represents the way things are these spiralling days - £6.95p per person. This is the actual cost by the hotel; it could perhaps have been worse.

PLEASE INDICATE TO MICHAEL WHEN WRITING (WITH SAE) IF YOU WILL REQUIRE OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATION NEARBY.

MENU: Yorkshire pudding & Onion gravy
Roast Sirloin of Beef and Horseradish sauce.
Sliced green beans/Cauliflower.
Roast Potatoes.

Fruit Meringue
Coffee (Cream).

Bar will be available and wines as required at dinner.



Vol. IX. No. 26 (New Series). 18 NOVEMBER 1933

BING CROSBY COMING AT £1,000 A WEEK

London Engagements Arranged at Last Doubling Variety and Cabaret

BUT NOT UNTIL NEXT MAY?

FOR several months on end there have been reports flying around the West End that Bing Crosby was on his way to London. On one famous occasion THE MELODY MAKER even received a 'phone message saying that the celebrated crooner had been seen in the West End driving in a big white Rolls-Royce.

On another occasion it was reported to us that somebody had seen Bing Crosby's name being made into a Neon sign for a famous West End restaurant.

We had to dispel these rumours one by one, because it was known to us that Crosby's contractual obligations in Hollywood would not permit him to leave America this year.

And Worth It!

Now, however, we have learned from a most reliable source that he is definitely fixed to come in May under a contract with the Palladium with which he will double a famous West End restaurant at a combined fee of £1,000 a week.

This for a single artist is undoubtedly terrific money, but we are the last people in the world to say that he is not worth every penny of it.

Bing's singing becomes more and more impressive, and though he is referred to more often than not as a crooner, he is definitely nothing of the sort. The virility and richness of his voice make him incomparable as a singer of popular songs, whether it be with or without the medium of the microphone.

His recent Brunswick record of the *Last Round-up* is sung so powerfully and richly that it looks like being the hit record of the season, bigger even than *Please*, which was his furore in the *Big Broadcast* film.

Should he personally catch sight of these words, he may accept our assurances that he will have an overwhelmingly favourable reception when he makes his first visit to London.



Bing Crosby

LOOK BACK! LOOK BACK!
Ah, but that was long ago...No Prizes for getting where THAT comes from....

This page (and the facing one) will conjure up the 'great days' for the veterans among us. For those who found Bing later it may be an eye-opener.

The date is plain to see; surely nothing could more completely illustrate the tremendous impact Bing had on Britain than this write-up of so long ago. Nine years before WHITE CHRISTMAS was first heard. And as we said in the previous issue, Bing merely took his place as the world's most popular singer in the 2nd World War.

November 1933 - we had barely got over seeing THE BIG BROADCAST, and the visual Bing had more than confirmed the high opinions we all had of him. And the warmth of this write up, too..."if his personal eye catches this ...he will have an overwhelmingly favourable reception..." Alas, their reliable source was hardly that. As is well known, Bing didn't set foot in Britain until the advent of World War II - and late in it, too. Such were his 'contractual obligations' in America.

But, that didn't prevent stories such as this appearing with great regularity. We won't say with boring regularity, for each time we found ourselves thinking: May be he IS coming....at last! It does illustrate, however, just how keen everyone was that this astonishing Mr. Crosby should come here...

And note the early dismissal of Bing as "a Crooner!" No fear, Bing SANG.....

7 October 1933

Commercial Records (21)

CROSBY EXCELS HIMSELF



Bing Crosby

BRUNSWICK.

(Warner Brunswick, Ltd.)

10 in. Black Label, 2s. 6d.

October 1 list, released October 1, 1933.

Bing Crosby (with orchestral accompaniment).

"I'VE GOT TO PASS YOUR HOUSE."
"BLUE PRELUDE."

(01577)

EVERYTHING in this record is absolutely ace high, and it must surely rank as one of the finest vocal discs ever issued.

Bing is at the top of his form, and the grand recording brings out every inflection of his splendid voice.

Both numbers are of the blue type, and Bing renders them perfectly, backed up by an able and artistic accompaniment.

These performances are very moving, and it is a thrill of a lifetime to hear the way Bing finishes the first number. What a climax!

* * *

COVENT GARDEN'S CROONING CONTEST AND ALL-BRASS DANCE BAND 11/33

ON Thursday, October 26, the final of the Bing Crosby Crooning Contest was held at Covent Garden, and after a very close finish Mr. Stan Gold was adjudged the winner by popular acclamation, thus becoming entitled to the seven-guinea trophy which the management put up for the winner as an alternative to a week's engagement as a crooner.

Lesser Crosbys

Stan, however, preferred the engagement, and will appear as vocalist at Covent Garden in the near future.

The runners-up were Mr. J. Spencer and Mr. Lee Smith, who came second and third respectively, the former being presented with a silver cup as a second prize, while the third prize consisted of an album of records of the numbers

used in the contest, sung by Bing Crosby.

Here we are back in 1933 with the **KEEPING TRACK** of its day! Be it noted too - the records we are **STILL** playing today; and with the same feelings about them. Interesting about the prices: if the average wage was £3.00 then - and its around £100.00 now - what would a Bing Brunswick single cost if they had marched hand in hand? Between £4 and £5 !

Above you will confirmation of what we have been saying about Crosby contests all thro' the 30's.....alas, we never heard of Stan Gold...

AND THIS IS HOW TRADE PAPERS ANNOUNCED BING'S NEW SONGS IN 1933:

nov. '33

Two Sensational Hits from Bing Crosby's New Picture **"TOO MUCH HARMONY"**

THANKS AND THE DAY YOU CAME ALONG

THE CROSBY INFLUENCE

We're pleased to present another story from across the Atlantic. It appeared some time ago but like most Crosby stories is timeless - and always relevant. The writer is ARNE FOGEL of Minneapolis, Minnesota and appeared originally in the Twin Cities Magazine of that State. Arne is a considerable performer himself both as writer of radio shows and as vocalist on radio and TV there. Although not of vintage age perhaps it is even more remarkable that Arne, in this article, shows he is a Crosby-appreciator of considerable expertise and knowledge. He is, of course, also one of our Stateside members.

'You sing into a little hole
year after year, and then
you die...'

On the previous page
2nd paragraph of the
note under the cutting,
it should read: "Above
you will SEE confirm-
ation &c."

Those were Bing Crosby's words in a pleasant little film entitled THE BIG BROADCAST of 1932. It was a musical about the early excitement of the brand new big radio network stars and shows, and it served as Bing's feature film debut in a starring role.

The line was a pretty laughable piece of movie philosophy even by 1932 standards. In retrospect, however, the line becomes much more poignant: it's a nugget prediction of the longevity of the (then new) network radio concept. And much more, it is a young musical phenomenon accurately predicting his own career pattern for the next 45 years. But at the time, it was just a line in a movie script.

To seriously consider making mass media music for an entire lifetime would have been inconceivable for Bing Crosby in 1932. As the very first mass media pop star, he had no role model. Although he admired the work of Jolson and several jazz performers, there was no "grand eminence" of pop music before Crosby came along. But then came the chain-reaction: Sinatra, Presley, The Beatles, etc. Bing was the first to learn that a phenomenon can endure, providing he is talented, innovative and inspiring.

Innovative? Inspiring? Bing Crosby? He remains one of the most well known figures in the history of American entertainment, but most think of him today as the "Mr. Show-biz" type; a clever and humorous entertainer who also happened to sing pleasantly. But, in fact, the stylistic contributions of Bing Crosby to the world of popular music are so overwhelming as to be almost invisible to those who aren't old enough to directly remember the changes.

The surest way to gauge the influence of any musical artist is to examine the work of those who came prior to his appearance on the scene. Check the recordings: hear for yourself. Before the late 1920's, a "popular singer" still meant one who was classically trained. If the listener didn't care for opera, he could listen to stage-trained belters like Jolson and Irving Kaufman. A fad of the day was the stilted whining tenor of such singers as Gene Austin and Rudy Vallee. Worst of all, the leading orch-

estras featured "studio vocalists" on all of their records. Most of these singers are quite unbearable today, and none other than Jolson were really taken seriously at the time. Much less accessible to the public at large were the great blues singers like Bessie Smith. Louis Armstrong had barely begun to sing on disc at this time; he was mainly focussing on his instrumental career.



In these pre-network radio times, a singer had no chance to develop a public personality. No talking pictures either....just those scratchy, acoustically recorded discs for which a Caruso or Jolson was needed for maximum bombastic effect. As a result, the big guns of popular music in the '20's were the dance bands. None was bigger than Paul Whiteman. Whiteman had pretensions of "high art" for his music, and the quality of his music depreciated with every new "arty" touch. Possibly sensing that the public was tiring of his overblown arrangements, Whiteman began to hire some real jazz talent in 1926; such youngsters as Bix Beiderbecke, Jimmy and Tommy Dorsey, Joe Venuti, Eddie Lang, Matty Malneck, Frankie Trumbauer and arranger Bill Challis. Thrust into this company was Whiteman's new vocal trio, "Rhythm Boys", featuring a young jazz fiend named Crosby.

Crosby didn't scream like Jolson, he didn't whine like Vallee. He was certainly influenced by Jolson's sense of drama, but to this he added a new element: musicianship. He was infected by the jazz spirit of the Whiteman company and after four years of close association, he could scat out a Venuti chorus note for note with Lang's guitar. He could also handle rhythm songs in an instinctive lighthearted way. He could improvise. Even the torchiest Crosby ballad was an interpretation, rather than the bland vocalizations of the era. There were also the Crosby "gimmicks": the whistling, the boo-bpo-boo's and the smoky, throaty voice were as unique and attractive to listeners of 1931 as were the "yeah, yeah, yeahs" of a later generation.

Enter the microphone, the "little hole", the passageway to all of the wonderful new gadgets that would change the world: radio, electrically recorded discs, talking pictures. The innovative young vocalist seemed to have a genius for mass media intimacy.

The end product was the first phenomenon of the airwaves: Bing. He became the inspiration for everyone that came after (including Sinatra), for the next 30 years.

A few facts: at the peak of Crosby's career, he was the number one film star, largest selling recording artist, and most popular radio singer in the world. And although his movie career waned with the number of parts available to an aging crooner, he never stopped selling records. More than 509 million Bing Crosby records have been sold; more than any other recording artist in history with the exception of Elvis Presley. And when one considers the fact that records in the '30's and '40's sold only a fraction of the amount that they totalled in later years, it further magnifies Crosby's achievement.

In recent years, such jazz and pop critics as Nat Hentoff, Leonard Feather and Henry Pleasants have written with great admiration of Crosby's art. But despite his popularity, the general public is less aware of his musical contribution than they are of flashier artists like Sinatra. The reason for this lies in the Crosby persona. Its easy to overlook the artistic attributes of one so unassuming, so casual, so "regular". There has never been anything

esoteric or even "flashy" about Crosby. From the mid 50's on, he seemed to be deliberately shunting his pop-vocalist roots and assuming the identity of an orange juice salesman and a Christmas entertainer.

It was as if he really wanted the public to forget that he had been an important force in contemporary music. When he finally decided, in 1975, to resume a vigorous recording schedule, and to make personal appearances, he was greeted with love, new hit songs and standing room only audiences. It seems that a prototype pop superstar just can't lose his hold on the public, in spite of image problems.

But after all, quality endures. Art endures. Image doesn't matter in the long run. In 1962, as a junior high student, I remember being caught in the act of browsing through the Bing Crosby section of a local record store. The wise-guy classmate who caught me gave me the horse-laugh; after all, he was hip enough to be checking out the newest Fabian release. Now, 19 years later, try to find the newest disc by Fabian (or any of thousands of others). The Crosby records are available in abundance. They are his principal legacy. And as the legacy of the most popular, prolific and innovative pop singer of the first half of the century, the Crosby records will be available for some time to come.

Editor: Our thanks and acknowledgements to Arne Fogel for this comprehensive assessment of the Crosby influence.

Just one thought: Arne mentions, as have others, the change in the Crosby career in the mid-50's. I feel there can be little doubt that the termination of his long recording career with Decca (plus the fact that his guiding genius had died - Jack Kapp) caused thoughts in Bing that might be paraphrased as: Heck, more than 25 years regular recording...its been enough. It may have been too much. The years went by and he continued to make albums...then came that lung operation which caused so much concern but, happily, turned out to be benign. I think the concern expressed at that time caused a multitude of thoughts in Bing's mind then. Commonsense told him that while he could still sing well at 73-74 years of age he couldn't really expect, in the normal mortal nature of things to go on much longer - and he was seized with the thought of - in his way - trying to repay the great respect, love, and admiration that was obviously felt for him. Hence, the historic and memorable public appearances. And the incredible finale came after Bing had added so much more to his already unmatched career.

A final note about ARNE FOGEL: he received much encouragement from Bing himself concerning the work he undertook in not only promoting Bing, but popular music generally.

How on earth can one get a photograph of the Gonzaga statue? No matter how it is taken it is a bronze mass and can only come out virtually as a silhouette. And when it comes to a MINIATURE of it, taken from a newspaper photograph the result is pretty night hopeless! However, the story opposite is self-explanatory: and IT IS a good picture of JOHN JOYCE, our publishing benefactor.....

John's bronze tribute

A HEART attack robbed Bing Crosby fanatic John Joyce of the chance of taking part in the birthday celebrations of his idol in America.

Instead, Mr. Joyce ended up celebrating at his Gateshead home.

For with the help of an American friend he managed to buy one of only 100 bronze Crosby statues cast to mark the event.

They are copies of a 16ft. bronze statue unveiled at the singer's former university in Washington.

Mr. Joyce has been a fan for 45 years — since he was five.

His home in Birchfield Gardens, Low Fell, is crammed with Crosby memorabilia. He has a special Crosby den where he keeps all his posters, photographs, Crosby letters, records and other items he has picked up on his American trips.

He has 400 78s, 300 L.P.s and hundreds of hours of tape material never put on record.

"I was delighted to get the statue," said Mr. Joyce, a book-binder. "It is my most prized possession. There were only 100 made and I was very lucky to get one."

Mr. Joyce bought the statue with the help of a priest friend at the university — also a Crosby fan.

He contacts fans all over the world and has been writing to the priest for a number of years.

Mr. Joyce is a member of the International Crosby Circle, and every year dozens of fellow members visit the family.

Mr. Joyce's wife, Marguerita is also a keen fan and travels with him to America.

"We were really looking forward to the birthday celebrations at the



John Joyce with his Bing Crosby statue.

university," he said. "We had to cancel at the last minute because I had a heart attack and the doctor advised me not to fly this year."

Neither his son nor daughter is a Crosby fan although he says at 25, his daughter is now starting to "see the light."

His grand-daughter, Sarah, aged two, is a regular visitor to his Crosby den and some of her first words — taught by her grandfather, of course — were Bing Crosby.

A SMILE FROM 'CALL ME LUCKY'

(BING'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY: WITH ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS)

When Joe (Venuti) and I were in Hollywood with the Whiteman Orchestra in 1929 working on the Old Gold program, Charlie King was our guest star on one program. Charlie was an attraction because he'd been featured in one of the first musical talkies. The Old Gold program ran for a whole hour. We rehearsed for it afternoons at the old KHJ studio in downtown Los Angeles. In those days radio was regarded as a frighteningly technical medium and we approached it much more seriously than we did later in its development. We rehearsed and rehearsed to make sure everything would be perfect. The soloists had to learn their positions at the microphone; the section mikes had to balance, the opening had to come off with split-second precision. As part of this intensive preparation, we were rehearsing with Charlie King. Charlie was a singer of the old school. He was a great guy but in the opinion of such irreverent individuals as myself, he was far better as a comedian and dancer than as a singer. He was what we call a ricky-tick singer today - meaning that his style was a little on the rassmataz side.

During rehearsal, when he began to give out with that "Just bring a sma-ile to Old Broadway" stuff, Venuti was fascinated and he kept his eyes on Charlie throughout the rehearsal. Before the show we had an hour break, and when we went out to find something to eat, Joe disappeared. He came back just before we went on the air.

As I've said, a radio program was more or less sacrosanct then, so we were nervous and Whiteman was in a swivet. He was getting money by the sackful from Old Gold and it would continue to jingle in - if things went smoothly. His music was the best in the land, and it had to sound that way. It wasn't transcribed. He had only one crack at it - when we were on the air. So there was much tension before the show. Then voom! The red light was on and the awful moment had arrived. The show started well, and presently it was time for Charlie King's solo. He stood up to face the mike. As he took his place, Joe opened his violin case and pulled out an old blunderbuss of the vintage of 1870, and drew a bead on Charlie. We began to laugh. We didn't really think that Joe would shoot King, but you could never be sure with Venuti. He was wholly unpredictable, and I remember thinking that King was in some slight jeopardy, even if the weapon was loaded only with rock salt.

Joe kept the gun on him, as if daring him to send one more corny note soaring from his larynx, and I thought Whiteman would have a stroke. He'd lost control of the band,; we were laughing so hard we were hors de combat and Charlie King was singing a capella. But towards the end some of the more sedate instrumentalists rallied and mustered enough breath to give Charlie a finishing chord.

Editor: Some humourist, Joe Venuti - but I remember Bing cut me to the quick when I first read this piece, umpteen years ago. Charlie King appeared, as Bing says, in one (if not THE) first film musicals - the original BROADWAY MELODY. I remember seeing it as a boy and came out of the cinema in a daze of wonderment. Wonderment at the whole concept of a musical film - and also thinking that Charles King was the finest singer/dancer I'd ever seen! Probably was up till then. And until I read this I hadn't realised that Charlie probably was a ricky-tick singer! Obviously, he was more accustomed to singing on the stage than on a film set - or a broadcasting studio and had to "put it over".

A CROSBY QUIZ

Purely for amusement only; not to worry if you don't get them all. The idea is you don't consult discographys/sleeves for the answers - not at first, anyway..... Answers further on in this issue.

1. Who considered he might make Bing "the next Vaughn Monroe" - and who was Vaughn Monroe?
2. On which record did Bing artlessly enquire if he sounded like Gene Autry and ask "...will he sue me?"
3. Bing was accompanied by The Crinoline Choir on a record; Which one? And do you know the orchestra too?
4. How many records did Bing make with son Gary: Two, six, ten - or a dozen?
5. The Merry Macs were a well-known vocal group on their own account; they made four tracks with Bing. Name two?
6. Bing made several records with Connee Boswell but only one with the Boswell Sisters. What was it?
7. The Frying Pan Five accompanied Bing on half-a-dozen records. Who directed them?
8. Bing made two rhythmic tracks with Louis Jordan. What were they?
9. Who was Frank Lovejoy - and what was his connection with Bing?
10. On which album did Bing sing THE PAGAN LOVE SONG and THE CUBAN LOVE SONG?
11. On which label did the album A SOUTHERN MEMOIR appear?
12. And who conducted the accompaniment?
13. BING 1 (BING'S HOLLYWOOD: BRUNSWICK): what is its individual title?
14. When did Bing record the PEACE PRAYER OF ST. FRANCIS and THE BLESSING OF ST. FRANCIS? Year will be sufficient!
15. On SONGS I WISH I HAD SUNG (THE FIRST TIME AROUND) LAT 8138 Bing sings WHEN MY BABY SMILES AT ME, To which artist was this 'dedicated'? (Bing thanks him on the recording).
16. What is the very first song on Bing's autobiography set (of five records, that is) -
17. On 7th August 1945 Bing recorded two similar-sounding titles with Carmen Cavallero accompanying on piano. What were they?

We're not suggesting anyone will be able to answer all these straight off - but we hope it is amusing -and instructive !

We we said, answers further on...



BING - TAPE PIONEER

Obviously, a personality of the unique stature of Mr. Crosby figures a lot in books - and literature generally. It would, for example, be impossible to write a book, or compile a discography, of the 20th century, or write about radio, TV, films and other aspects of the entertainment industry, without Bing taking a prominent part. That's taken for granted. We almost take it for granted, too, that apart from these activities Bing figures in sporting books, e.g. golf, shooting, angling &c. And its far from unusual to come across his name in fictional books, novels, as being an intrinsic part of the scene, certainly in the 30's and 40's. As for song lyrics - ask Dick Nettleton!

But, it seems, Bing's name has to be included in any serious history of the development of tape-recording and, ultimately, video recording. A book has just been published on behalf of the 3M company entitled 25 YEARS OF VIDEO TAPE RECORDING. It is a highly technical volume and of interest mainly to technicians, one would imagine. The author is one David Kirk, an American. 3Ms, by the way, is the abbreviation or trademark of the Minnesota Mining & Manufacturing Corp'n. (American) with subsidiaries in Britain and famous for its Scotch-tape.

Early in the book we read:

"Sound recording on coated-plastic tape was improved during the second world war to the point where Hitler's radio broadcasts, replayed from AEG Magnetophon equipment, no longer indicated his location. It was now impossible to distinguish between a live and a recorded AM audio transmission. Several Magnetophon recorders left Germany as reparations in 1945 and influenced designers throughout the world. Alexander M. Poniatoff, an American manufacturer of electric motors, attended a Magnetophon demonstration given by Mr. John Mullin (later active in developing the Crosby VTR) and immediately recognised its potential. His company, Ampex, was already planning the production of audio amplifiers and loudspeakers.

When the late Bing Crosby suffered a drop in radio popularity in 1947, the poor quality of disc-to-disc copy-editing was blamed. Crosby's 30-minute studio production^{was} cut straight to 78rpm gramophone records by the American Broadcasting Company. The singer was unwilling to accept his sponsor's (Philco) suggestions that the programme be transmitted live, but did agree to originate a show experimentally on the locally accessible Magnetophon. This recording was made in Los Angeles with doubtful ABC staff insisting that the final edited tape be transcribed to "sturdy and dependable" disc. Encouraged by the improved quality and by good audience response, Crosby was told of Poniatoff's activity in designing an audio tape recorder. Bing Crosby Enterprises duly placed the 20-unit minimum order Ampex was prepared to accept, at

40,000 dollars per unit, selling the recorders in turn to ABC....."

The book goes on to say that Bing Crosby Enterprises played a big part in the next stage of tape recording - visual recording, or video tape as it is now known.

In the CHRONOLOGY section at the back of the book - which, incidentally, starts with "1877 - The microphone was invented by Emile Berliner of the United States. Thomas A. Edison of the United States invented the phonograph (gramophone)." - under the year 1948 is recorded:

"Ampex: delivered its first No. 200 audio tape recorder to Bing Crosby Enterprises. At an Ampex demonstration which featured the audio tape recording of the Bing Crosby ABC radio program, ABC purchased 12 recorders at 5,200 dollars each."

It was only about this time, also, that the developers switched from wire to tape! And when you consider that we now have cassette recorders so simple to operate, complete with Dolby noise-reduction systems, not to mention VIDEO recorders themselves, and then consider it was only 33 years ago that the first tape recorders were made, one can only conclude that the developments have indeed been mind-boggling!

And, Bing Crosby is in this history of development as a major participant!

As we have read - particularly in Lionel Pairpoint's PHILCO RADIO TIMES, Bing did have quite a battle with his sponsors to have his programmes transcribed - but that was on the famous 16" discs playing at 78rpm. (A large pile of these were later discovered, dusty and musty, in John Scott Trotter's garage and are the source of so much material that would have otherwise been lost!). Clearly the tape was a big step forward and the technical quality of Bing's programmes thenceforth got him back, as it were. But note, his radio popularity 'fell off' in 1947 - and Bing had then already been THE major radio star for 15 years at least.

And, as a point of interest, the Ampex company still, in their advertisements, proclaim that Bing Crosby was their first customer.

You will have seen that the really big development came during the War in Germany; it was well known that if Hitler broadcast from, say, Stuttgart, or Berlin, or Nuremberg those towns would get special treatment from the RAF. Hence the "recorded speeches" to 'fool the enemy'!

Buddy Cole was quick to spot the potentialities of tape recording, also, mainly on Bing's behalf but his name does not appear in this history.

As a footnote, it might be said that the two gentlemen named above as inventing the microphone and the gramophone were owed a big debt by Bing! But equally it may be claimed he put their momentous inventions to glorious use!

We may reiterate that the book is a highly technical one and thus there is little point, we feel, in recommending it to members - even if we knew where it could be obtained. But if you ARE a tape technician, you could try: 3M UNITED KINGDOM LTD., 3M House, PO Box 1, Bracknell, Berks. RG12 1JU. No price is given in or on the book. It may be free.

"BIX"

**** 50 years on, an appreciation by **** JOHN BIGNELL

To later Crosby admirers, Bix Beiderbecke may not even be a name; to others his name is magic. Certainly, as Bing himself never failed to proclaim, he was an important part of the Crosby mosaic:

6th August 1981 was a stormy day; lightning flashed, thunder rolled and visibility at noon was more akin to midnight. And I pondered on the fact that it was exactly 50 years to the day that one of music's - jazz music that is - most tragic geniuses died.

Of German extraction, Beiderbecke was probably the first real jazz influence on the career of Bing Crosby. Bing had grown up listening to the efforts of the early New Orleans jazzmen on record but it was not until he joined the Paul Whiteman organisation in 1926 that he began to mix with, and sing with, jazz musicians. As you will read elsewhere (Arne Fogel) Whiteman, moving with the times, decided to leaven his 'orchestral' outfit with some jazzmen. And being Whiteman, he employed the best - Bix, Joe Venuti, Eddie Lang, the Dorsey Brothers - and though he didn't know it at the time, he employed the young man destined to be the greatest style-setter of all band vocalists. Bing Crosby. This galaxy of young talent blazed a pioneer trail whose influence is still valid today. Of all of these, however, I firmly believe that Bix had the profoundest influence on Bing as far as the development of his jazz-phrasing attributes were concerned.

Most of the records Bix made with Whiteman sound 'corny' and dated, yet every Bix solo on cornet still comes thro' clear as a bell and as fresh as tho' they had been recorded yesterday. An early drawback to the early 20's recordings were the quite appalling 'vocals', coupled with non-electric recording techniques. Then, along came Bing - searching, perhaps unconsciously, for the style that was to make the following decade historic in the world of popular music. One of the traits which make the recordings Bing made from about 1932 to 1936 absolutely unique was the incredible jazz inflections he gets into songs which other singers recorded completely without any jazz feeling whatsoever. And this was the style which endeared him, incidentally, to the jazz 'purists' who later deplored Bing's evolution as a smooth, even albeit, a rhythmic balladeer. And this early unique style, never before attempted and never since emulated, was surely the result of the influence of Bix. Venuti, Lang and the others helped, but Bix was the main force.

Listening to Bing on any of his many recordings before Bing came along, the vocal refrains seem out of place, even pathetic. But Bing, showing early signs of the mastery he was to display throughout his halcyon years, was able to provide vocal efforts which completely complemented the perfection of Bix's cornet work. And his style influenced of course, not only Bing, but succeeding cornet/trumpet players thro' the ages.

Sadly, Bix had a self-destructive genius too, an inner demon which drove him to excesses, destroying him at the pathetically early age of 28. He was born of well-to-do parents but was, it seems, a disappointment to his father who wanted him to be a classical musician. Bix chose to pioneer a field of jazz music which blazed a scorching trail and opened up new vistas on the jazz horizon. His greatest disappointment was that his father never acknowledged his genius and this seeking but failing to gain parental approval was a major factor, it has been said, in his moral decline and early demise.

On September 13 1929 Whiteman's orchestra recorded WAITING AT THE END OF THE ROAD, with Bix on cornet, and Bing singing. It was their last recording and less than 2 years later, Bix was dead. Bing, to be further saddened by the early death of another colleague (Eddie Lang) must have been sobered by these events, despite what some 'authors' may say. Bing, having learned, strode on his way for decades to come....



LIFE LINES

BING WENT THE STRINGS.....
 Of the flappers' hearts.....
 When the Crosby boy.....
 SANG in his first talkie short.....
 THEN came.....
 "The Big Broadcast".....
 AND a swell white rhythm singer.....
 WAS lost to the fold.....
 NOW and again he breaks through.....
 THE sugar and.....
 SWINGS OUT ON A VOCAL.....
 WITNESS THOSE four sides.....
 He cut with.....
 JOE Sullivan last year.....
 "SOMEDAY Sweetheart" was grand.....
 BARREL HOUSE music.....
 BING is 32 and hails from.....
 Tacoma way.....
 IN his early days with.....
 PAUL WHITEMAN.....
 He sang a lot better than he does now.....
 THAT is.....
 HE phrased much better.....
 THE Rhythm Boys.....
 WERE a grand trio.....
 NOTHING BEEN LIKE THEM SINCE.....
 HIS favourite accompanist was the.....
 IMMORTAL Eddie Lang.....
 He never made a film.....
 OR a record without.....
 EDDIE back of him.....
 NOW he uses Joe Sullivan.....
 ANOTHER boy with ideas.....
 BING is happily married to.....
 DIXIE Lee.....
 They have three bonnie kiddies.....
 MAY they all sing and swing.....
 LIKE Bing used to swing and sing.....

Thus, Bing (probably tongue-in-cheek!) written off - and this appeared in a trade paper on Feb 1, 1936. 'Lost to the fold' forsooth. Its only fair to add that some of the writers in this paper adopted a lofty, 'arty' approach to jazz. They believed, for example, that jazz began and ended around 1933, with Duke Ellington. And Bing's career virtually ended when he left the Rhythm Boys! One of those "was my face red" pieces... and it could have been the same reporter who went so ga-ga over Bing eight years later when Mr. Crosby arrived in London for the first time.

AN INTRIGUING ITEM APPEARED IN "THE SUN" (not our's, Melbourne's, Australia) on 23rd July last. It read as follows:

"WARTIME RECORD"

Canberra - World War 2 radio shows which were nearly 'lost at sea' have been given to the National Library.
The 42 hour-long recordings, featuring Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, Red Skelton and others, have never been released commercially.
They were produced by the US armed forces radio service to boost troops' morale.
Mr. M. L. Nichols, former officer-in-charge of the RAAF cine unit, said they were about to be dumped in the sea off Borneo when a US officer gave them to him as a gift.
Mr. Nichols has given them to the National Library."

That's all - and we are completely mystified.

ANSWERS TO QUIZ (page 27)

Deliberately printed upside-down for those who read BING backwards...

1. The immortal Jimmy Durante in a broadcast, subsequently commercially issued as SING SING, SING SING, SING GENTLE, and Bing replied: "Sheer Heaven!" It was in this song also that Jimmy criticised Bing's theme song "...it's not so much the song as the way you sing it!" A Durante gem. Vaughan Monroe was a bandleader/vocalist, later soloist, with an attractive voice. He had four million-selling records of which the biggest was easily GHOST RIDERS IN THE SKY - top of the hit parade for about 11 weeks in 1948.
 2. CLEMENTINE.
 3. SWANEE RIVER: George Stoll.
 4. We make it ten.
 5. DOLORES/PALM MOON/DO YOU EVER THINK OF ME?/YOU MADE ME LOVE YOU.
 6. LAWD, YOU MADE THE NIGHT TOO LONG.
 7. John Scott Trotter.
 8. MY BABY SAID 'YES' / YOUR SOCKS DON'T MATCH.
 9. An actor who appeared in MAN WITHOUT A COUNTRY.
 10. EL SENOR BING (MGM)
 11. Decca's 'London' label.
 12. Paul Smith; he also played piano.
 13. 'Easy to Remember'.
 14. 1954 - 4th November.
 15. Ted Lewis, bandleader known as the Great Tragedian of Jazz.
 16. MUDDY WATER.
 17. I CAN'T BEGIN TO TELL YOU / I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT YOU'RE IN LOVE WITH ME.
- We keep our fingers crossed with the answers; and hope you at least enjoyed attempting it!

...and on THE RECORD SCENE:

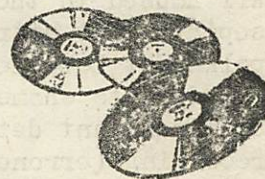
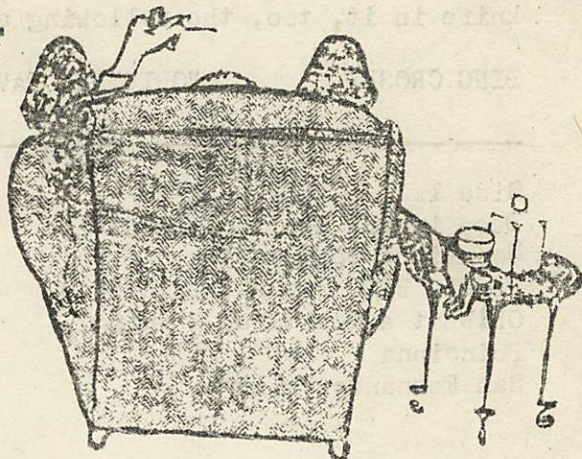
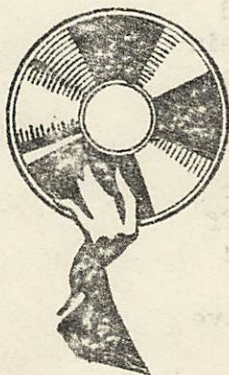
KEEPING *track*

Thanks to the slightly unusual circumstance of obtaining records after BERT BISHOP had valiantly attempted his feature the Editor finds himself in the not-to-be envied position of deputising for Bert!

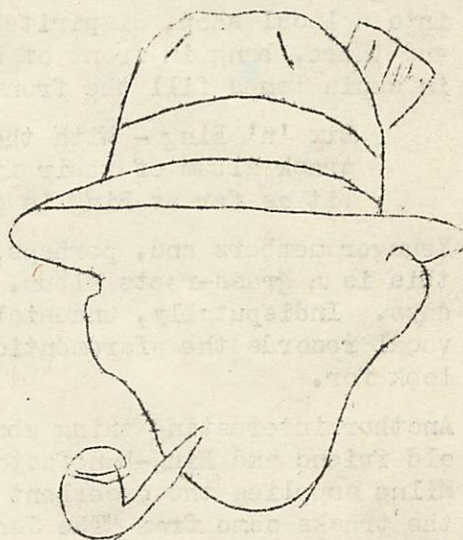
As far as the major companies are concerned the record scene is bleak; to be compared perhaps with the summer of '81 - until its later stages, anyway. Some unanswered questions remain conspicuous if only because there have been no answers to them. What, for example, has happened to the remaining 24 remastered but so far unissued Bing/Buddy Cole and subsequently Pete Moore, tracks? What has happened to the poems? They seem to have slowly disappeared into the murky past of folklore, myths and legends.

Ken Barnes has abandoned his record-producing activities; the big companies are so busy - not to mention shaken - by changes of hands, owners, with consequent reshuffles and house-clearing.... its fair to wonder if anyone really KNOWS what is available. Then again, the economic climate is such that issues seem to be confined to moronic tracks that will sell a million in a fortnight....no one, it seems, is likely to regard the market in a long-term sense - and cater for those over the age of, say, twelve.

Another question: we wrote to EMI/MCA (which company we believe to be the current holders of most Bing material) months back, as we told you, asking why it was that Germany, Italy, Japan (forsooth) &c. were busy issuing desirable Crosby albums while in Britain (and the States) there was nothing - except apathy.



You won't be too startled to learn that PERRY COMO is another artist to whom we can hearken with a degree of pleasure. A true and self-acknowledged disciple of Mr. C. with nevertheless, a style of his own. On his latest album, LIVE ON TOUR (RCALP 5009) he pays a fine tribute to Bing by the inclusion of a medley of ten of Bing's great songs.



Surprise, surprise! There has been no reply. Not a word. One wonders whether EMI are desirable custodians for the MCA contract which was so surprisingly taken away from Decca. And then, as if to underline the situation, rub salt in the wound, twist knife in it, too, the following album turns up:

BING CROSBY

"ORIGINAL FAVOURITES"

MCA RECORDS FRANCE
202-937-241

Side 1:

Deep in the Heart of Texas
Moonlight Becomes You
People Will Say we're in Love
Oh! What a Beautiful Morning
Poinciana
San Fernando Valley.

Side 2:

I Love You
I'll Be Seeing You
Amor
Long Ago and Far Away
You Belong to my Heart.
On the Aitchison, Topeka & the
Santa Fe.

All housed in the most attractive sleeve you ever saw; red, gold, sepia. That attractive head and shoulders of Bing wearing his polka-dot bow-tie. A sleeve that puts United Artists, not to mention Polydor, to shame. There are no sleeve notes as such but there are some relevant details, i.e. when Bing was born and where, first recording (erroneously given as with Paul Whiteman on Oct. 18, 1926) and the fact that, reputedly, Bing has sold more than 362-million records worldwide. AND ITS ALL IN ENGLISH!

Observant members will quickly cotton on to the fact that this album is one-half of the double album, STAR GOLD, issued some months ago - in GERMANY! Nothing startlingly new but a fine collection, nevertheless. Believe me, we're sorry to whet your appetite but we just have no idea how you can obtain this - unless you have a connection in France. What a situation, though?

Then there is a record you can get:

BIX 'N' BING 'LIVING ERA' AJA 5005 (UK) Price: Anything, it seems, from £3.50 to £4.75 as we've

How we hate these kiddy-wink titles! Bing 'N' Bix., seen. Bing 'n' Basie, Fish 'n' Chips, drinka pinta milka.. ugh. Maltreating the English language for no apparent reason. Football sox.... Having got that off our chest its the only thing to dislike about this surprise album. Imagine, we walked into a local shop, dispiritedly rather than with any anticipation, and there, bang in front of us, was this album! Well-known photos in sepia tones fill the front, which also contains the legend:

Bix 'n' Bing - With the Paul Whiteman Orchestra - a twenty track album of their finest moments. Which is going it a bit as far as Bing is concerned. No matter.

Younger members and, perhaps, the lady members, should be warned this is a grass-roots album. It is the Bing of the "Vocal Refrain" days. Indisputably, undeniably, authentic Bing but NOT the solo vocal records the aforementioned slices of the membership usually look for.

Another interesting thing about this issue is that it brings our old friend and Bing-benefactor back onto the record scene. Geoff Milne supplies the excellent notes; furthermore, the sleeve says the tracks come from "The Jennings & Daly Collection and the Geoff. Milne Collection". Except for the title, the album sleeve is most attractive.

Geoff. Milne's sleeve notes pay tribute to both Bix and Bing and speaks of their musical rapport. As indeed, do most writers - John Bignell's appreciation on page 30 of this issue makes interesting complementary reading.

The titles? Well, most of them have been around in various forms for years, notably on the RFA PAUL WHITEMAN STORY. As already stated, there are 20:



If your local shop cannot order it, the address is Academy Sound & Vision Ltd., 115 Fulham Rd., London, SW3 6RL.

Side 1: Changes.

(What Are you Waiting For) Mary?

There Ain't No sweet man worth the Salt of my Tears.

Sunshine.

Mississippi Mud.

High Water.

From Monday On

Lovable (as we've said elsewhere, this is not the 'Mack Sennett' Lovable)

My Pet

Louisiana.

Side 2: Do I Hear You Saying 'I Love You'?

You took advantage of Me.

'Tain't So, Honey, 'Tain't So.

That's My Weakness Now.

Because My Baby Don't Mean 'Maybe' Now.

I'm in the Seventh Heaven.

Reaching for Someone (and not Finding Anyone there)

Oh, Miss Hannah.

Your Mother & Mine.

Waiting at the end of the Road.

This is a great opportunity to get the original Bing/Whiteman records; Bing is heard to greater effect in some songs than others. Some, indeed, are with The Rhythm Boys as you will know. The style that made Bing, at the start, a sensation with the 'jazz boys' is most evident. Perhaps HIGH WATER, too, was Bing's most ambitious vocal of the time. An unusual number, well treated.

A piece appeared in THE OBSERVER of 2nd August last; it gave a similar appraisal of Beiderbecke and Bing as the sleeve notes and, indeed, as did John Bignell. It also made the curious observation: ".....(a) gratifying early death from dissipation." God preserve us from these jazz pundits. I mean, what does that remark mean?

Finally, we again say that while this record is highly desirable for most Bing collectors - its a neat package of the historic Bing - if old dance music, enlivened only by the cornet pyrotechnics of Bix, and the husky young voice of Bing, does not appeal to you - listen to some of it, at least, first. But the truth is, no real collection of Mr. Crosby would be complete without it.

Oh, while the address given above is as on the sleeve, it also says: Manufactured & Distributed by P.R.T. Records Ltd., 132 Western Rd., Mircham, Surrey CR4 3UT so that will be the address to which to write should you not spot the record, or your shop cannot, or won't, order.

Now we come to another album you certainly can get without too much trouble:

BING CROSBY & FRIENDS (with the John Scott Trotter Orchestra).

U.K. Magic AWE3

£4.50 plus P & P

Here we have what might fairly be termed a small catalogue of show business history - and all in exceptionally good quality:

Side 1:

Dearie (Ethel Merman)
 Lazybones (Louis Armstrong)
 The Wedding Samba (Andrews Sisters)
 Lonesome in the Saddle (Fred Allen)
 Just the Way you Are (Judy Garland)
 Yessir, That's My Baby (Firehouse 5)
 Yakka Hula Hicky Dula
 Enjoy Yourself (Bob Crosby)

Side 2:

Have I Told You Lately? (Bob Hope)
 Play A Simple Melody (Groucho Marx)
 Let's Take an Old-Fashioned Walk (Solo)
 Hello Ma Baby/In My Merry Oldsmobile/Call me up Some Rainy Afternoon/Walking my Baby Back Home - medley Judy Garland
 Blueberry Hill (Louis Armstrong)
 To Prove that I'm in Love (Patti Page)
 Lily of Laguna/Goodbye (Beatrice Lillie, Alec Templeton).

Radio material, of course - and no doubt you have at least heard the songs. The playing time is a surprising 38 minutes 57 seconds -

good value indeed. And this longer-than-usual playing time offsets the slightly odd circumstance whereby Bing's lovely duet with brother Bob (ENJOY YOURSELF) is repeated on this album, as is YESSIR THAT'S MY BABY.

Regarding the latter, its another of my big Bing-regrets that Mr. C. never made a full album collection with that remarkable outfit, the Firehouse Five plus Two. The tracks they did make - all broadcasts of course - are gems, with perhaps the best of them not yet on an album - PLEASE DON'T TALK ABOUT ME WHEN I'M GONE. That's in case any private producers are listening! This indeed was the sort of music Bing himself liked - and it always showed.

The duet with Bob Hope of HAVE I TOLD YOU LATELY? is hilarious - and again, exceptionally long.

And of course, Britain gets into the act, as it were, by the inclusion of numbers with Bea Lillie and Alec Templeton.

The cover is bright, glossy, yellow. Quite vivid, with a black/white drawing of Bing. Sleeve notes are knowledgeable - but unacknowledged! If you follow...there's no name.

Must reiterate that the sound quality of this album is incredibly good in view of the fact that most items are more than 30 years old. One sentence from the sleeve notes is worth reproducing here:

"These collaborations on radio often provided the catalyst for some of Bing's finest performances and it is hoped that this album will serve to illustrate the point"

It does indeed; and those who maintain that Bing invariably sang better on radio than on the more formal commercial recordings have ample evidence here to support their belief.

SO FAR AS WE KNOW, THIS RECORD IS, FOR THE MOMENT,
 ONLY AVAILABLE FROM LEGEND MUSIC - SEE "TRADING POST".

Despondent as we may sometimes get, the truth is that the Crosby record scene is never, never dead! We told you of the unexpected surprise of encountering the Bix and Bing album (to hell with the Bix 'n' Bing...) - bless us all, if the very next day we went back

to the same shop (to get another Copy of B & B) and we were greeted with the voice of Bing! In a shop crowded with punks and rock and rollers! Astonished enquiry revealed that the Reprise label has reissued three of its 'repertory company' albums, viz.

FINIAN'S RAINBOW (K54112) - Something Sort of Grandish.
 GUYS & DOLLS (K54113) - Fugue for Tinhorns, The Oldest-Established....
 SOUTH PACIFIC (K54115) - Younger than Springtime.

These are a doubtful proposition (a) because you probably already have them, and (b) because unless you are fond of the company Bing kept on these projects, you get little Bing (titles are shown above). YOUNGER THAN SPRINGTIME is an excellent track: but at £4.90? The other songs have little attraction for this writer but there you are - it IS Bing.

THE YOUNG BING CROSBY	RCA (HOLLAND)	No. not known, nor price.
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This album is a reissue, being a direct equivalent of RCA RD-27075, details of which may be found on page 134 of THE BING CROSBY LP-OGRAHY. Unlike the Camden reissue of this original album, the Dutch reissue carries all twelve titles involving Whiteman and Arnheim. Good stuff if you haven't already got it. Its a budget label and though the catalogue number isn't known it is known this album is available in the UK. Just look around, I suppose!

We are in receipt of two EP's - a rare event these days, but mention them with some diffidence as - again - we're not all that sure that they are readily obtainable. They are issued by THE BING CROSBY HISTORICAL SOCIETY through our good friend KEN TWISS; but we don't know just how many copies were pressed. No doubt those who have joined Ken's highly laudable society will get them.

A TRIBUTE TO BING BC1004 7" LP (LP because it plays at 33 $\frac{1}{3}$)

A Horse that Knows the Way Back Home	Darn that Dream
She's from Missouri.	I Had the Craziest Dream.

Side 1 features two film promotion songs for the film DIXIE. Also heard with Bing are Billy de Wolfe, Eddie Foy Jnr., and Lynne Overman. The fidelity on this 300-print (ah!) record is fairly good though one is somewhat surprised to read in the brief sleeve notes that Bing has had success "that has been unexcelled"! Side 2 presents a couple of tracks by Britain's own Roy Chappell - a unique honour for Roy who, a few years back, could have had no idea that the day would come when he would literally share a record with Bing Crosby. Unique honour for Roy and well deserved, not only on the evidence of these recordings but by previous listenings to his relaxed, melodic style which is so well-received around the clubs of Britain. There's no justice, one feels, when such a singer as Roy is virtually ignored by the record producers in this country. A further damning commentary on the state they are in.

A TRIBUTE TO BING No.3 BC 1004 7" LP

Where the Turf Meets the Surf	Man with the Mandolin
(Bing and friends	Blue Orchid
Beware.	

This, apparently, is the third of the currently annual pressings

of rare Crosby items thro' the good offices of, as said above, the Bing Crosby Historical Society. The first number is the song that was composed to promote the Del Mark Race Track in which Bing had a financial interest. A recording by Bing (not this one) is still played there each day of racing, 'tis said.

Track 2 on Side 1 is an 'out-take' from the film RHYTHM ON THE RIVER and has a piano only accompaniment by John Scott Trotter. It was never recorded elsewhere by Bing and only seen the light of day, to coin a phrase, in this guise on private issues. Apart from its obvious novelty appeal - Bing accompanied on piano by J.S.T. - BEWARE is a most attractive song and one must wonder why it was never published? Bing makes an obviously jocular tho' not easily heard, remark to John Scott, and later in the track a guitarist joins in.

Both the tracks on Side 2 come from a Kraft Music Hall broadcast of October 19, 1939 - well defined in the decade of Bing at his stylistic best.

The covers of these Tribute records are fairly basic, being black and white printing on a standard paper sleeve. However, the rear cover carries as much notation as space permits - in this instance by Bill Osborn, of Seattle. Creditable issues, but circulation restricted.

To conclude Keeping Track we might touch on a subject which may soon become very, very relevant and important. The question of Copyright. Our legal knowledge is sketchy but it is commonly believed and indeed current reference books confirm, that copyright exists for 50 years. At least it does in the case of an author and his literary work - for 50 years AFTER his death. No specific mention is made of musical recordings and the duration of copyright.

However, to repeat ourselves, it is believed that after 50 years ownership of recordings pass into the Public Domain and copyright no longer exists. We may well be wrong in this assumption or belief.

But if it is so, this very year of 1981 means that Bing's 1931 recordings are freed from copyright restrictions - and each succeeding year, i.e. 50 years on from 1932, 1933, 1934 and all the tremendous halcyon years of Bing's recordings will be place, to say the least, in a most intriguing position.

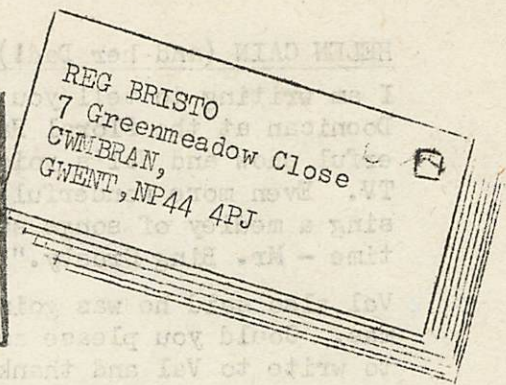
With the companies in disarray (as we have noted in this issue and on previous occasions) will they throw in the towel on what they own, or hitherto, owned? Will small, independent companies may hay while the big companies decline to shine? Will the known many vast private collections of Crosby material be in the field? It would depend, no doubt, on whether the owners of such collections felt it would be even a small commercial proposition. That there is a tendency for material to reach us via these small companies is very evident of recent years.

It doesn't seem unreasonable to assume that freedom from copyright restrictions has resulted in, for example, the BIX 'N' BING album of Paul Whiteman recordings - hitherto firmly held by RCA, and in this country, HMV and Columbia.

The prospects could be very bright indeed.

THE LEGEND OF BING - Member John Marshall's sterling written, composed and sung by, EP. containing the four tracks THE LEGEND OF BING/THE CIRCLE/BALLAD OF JOHNNY JONES/THEY'RE NOT MAKING CHRISTMAS is still available from John, 39 Kings Rd. Teddington, M'dx. at £1.75 post paid.

BING LETTERS



EDW. STURRUP, 3 Griffin Way, Sunbury-on-Thames, Midd'x:

I've just returned from a rather dramatic trip to Switzerland! I had 35 England (football) supporters in my group - all well-behaved I might add. We did a fair amount of our journeys by coach and I took Bing's Palladium concert cassette with me which we played in the coach. It was a big hit! One could almost say:

The hills were alive,
With the sound of Crosby...!

Editor: All right for some! Only the delicious Julie Andrews was missing...

ARTHUR BRUNETON, 175 Staines Rd., Laleham, Staines, Midd'x: I'd like to read an article about Phil Harris in BING. How did such a breezy, extrovert come to be perhaps the closest male friend of the privately rather quiet and introvert Bing? And what happened to the lovely Alice Faye?

Editor: Interesting - Bing only briefly mentions Phil Harris in CALL ME LUCKY regarding him being fun to play golf with....Phil recently claimed that he first met Bing around 1927 when he was drummer in a band that accompanied Bing (and the Rhythm Boys) on a one-night stand. Phil also said Bing did like solitude, as does he - away from performing, that is. As far as we know, the delightful Alice Faye is well and as lovely as ever.

(Mrs) PAT O'BRIEN, 46 Surrey Grove, Sutton, Surrey: I am enclosing an address where you can send a photo of Bing and have it impressed on a plate. I've had one done and it is really lovely. The plate is about 6 inches diameter and the cost is £5.90 inclusive of postage and packing and I got mine back in about a week. You need a picture for each plate ordered - and more than one means the price goes down, e.g.

2 plates	£10.80	(saving £1.00)
3 "	£15.70	" £2.00
4 "	£19.95	" £3.65
6 "	£28.90	" £6.50.

The address:
THE GIFT SHOP, 44 High St., Skipton, N. Yorks.

Editor: Knowing what some members make of their Crosbyana this may be useful information. Mary Joinson (21 Salisbury Rd. Werrington, Peterborough) has sent us a photograph of her Bing medallion, mounted on black velvet and beautifully framed. Looks great, too.



()

HELEN CAIN (and her Dad!) 14 Windsor Rd., Prescott, Merseyside:

I am writing to tell you about the night we went to see Val Doonican at the Floral Hall in Southport. It was a really wonderful show and Val's voice sounded better even than it does on TV. Even more wonderful was when Val said: "I am now going to sing a medley of songs sung by the greatest pop singer of all time - Mr. Bing Crosby."

Val also said he was going to dedicate a show to Bing at Christmas. Could you please ask all the members of the Crosby Circle to write to Val and thank him for helping to keep Bing's memory alive - and to ask him to sing more of Bing's songs on his show.

Editor: Helen (one of our younger members) is one of several who have written to us about Val Doonican's dedications to Bing; I imagine a letter, should you feel inclined, to the TV people (is it ITV or BBC just now?) will reach him.

(Mrs) AUDREY COOPER, 30 Broadway East, Carlton, Nottingham:

It was sad to read of the closing of the Crosby offices; seems so final - the end of an era. And to hear of the passing of Leo Lynn who had been with Bing such a long time. I was looking thro' some old 1979 magazines a friend had lent to my husband - THE DALESMAN is the name and would you believe, I came across a page with a picture of Bing and Ken Barnes. And the heading was: LEARNING ABOUT YORKSHIRE FROM BING CROSBY - and Ken it seems was born in Redcar! Bing was telling of shooting and fishing in Malham. Amazing where Bing pops up.

I enjoyed the article in which Bing refuted the story that he was a 'loner'. I don't think I would have coped with Bing's lifetime, all those meetings with hordes of people and yet invariably so charming and pleasant.

Soon after Elvis Presley died, a big factory in Nottingham had sprayed on its walls THE KING NEVER DIES. Next day it was observed that someone else had cleverly altered the King to Bing - so that it read THE BING NEVER DIES!

Editor: Nice chatty letter, and one which inspires some thoughts surely. Did, for instance, Bing turn to sports like fishing - especially - and hunting as an antidote, a safety-valve, to, as Audrey put it "all those meetings with hordes of people"? We have to believe now after Phil Harris so recently confirmed it, that Bing did welcome and enjoy solitude. When he could, that is. Certainly there are thousands of people who would confirm Bing's charming geniality when encountered; many people had that unexpected pleasure, especially in the last three years of his life. And it wasn't until Phil Harris also mentioned at the unveiling the death of Leo Lynn ("another lovely man...") that we heard of Leo's passing

The closing of the Crosby offices was sad; brought home to us just what Bing's death meant in that direction. Leslie Gaylor and indeed we ourselves, had enjoyed close liaison there for many years.

ARNOLD POPE, 69 Pool Bank St., Middleton, Manchester: I was interested in the story of a recent BING re. the re-recording of WHITE CHRISTMAS in 1947. Personally, I wish it had never been made!! It has always been one of my pet hates that at Christmas time one never hears the '42 version - and that it has never been issued in micro-groove. For me, this original '42 recording is so much better than the 1947 one, having Bing's younger and better

balanced tones, and also - for me - a certain magic and a certain indefinable 'something' that is lacking in the later recording. I also feel the same way - albeit to a lesser extent - regarding the '42 and '47 versions of SILENT NIGHT.

Editor: Hmmm...shameful though it is, I cannot readily differentiate between the two recordings! I have to listen intently and play them one after t'other... or even concurrently, to separate 'em. I wonder, though, why the re-recording was necessary - remember they went to the trouble of reassembling the orchestra and chorus again. Surely an excellent copy of the 1942 recording was available to make new 'masters'?

Its impossible to work it out, but I wonder just how many times Bing sang WHITE CHRISTMAS?

But on the subject of shameful revelations, I didn't know Michael Holliday had been in films! I turned on the telly the other morning for the cricket (nice to be retired ennit?) and there on ITV was a film - LIFE IS A CIRCUS I think was its name and it featured Mike. As this was such a surprise to me I neglected the cricket (cries of Shame!) and watched until Mike sang. It was uncanny; it wasn't a well-known song but the similarity to Bing (allowing for the fact they didn't look a bit alike) was uncanny. It was a rhythmic song and Mike even did that little shuffle and shrugged his shoulders in the way that Bing did - to conceal that it wasn't a real dance-step! Actually, the film was appalling - but Mike looked good and full of promise.....what a tragedy is Mike's story. Did he appear in any other films, does any one know?

RAY LEACH, 48 Lindlings, Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP1 2HE: I was thinking the other day if Bing had made his films for MGM instead of Paramount they would have been that much better than they were, don't you think?

We had IF I HAD MY WAY (not as the Editor said GOING MY WAY.) and PARIS HONEYMOON on the box. How I love those old songs - I HAVE EYES TO SEE WITH and YOU'RE A SWEET LITTLE HEADACHE. I used to sing these as a lad riding the old push-bike around the Hertfordshire country lanes. You see, I hadn't time to be a millionaire....

Editor: I must say members conjure up some fascinating images... like the postmen who used to do their early deliveries giving the morning air (and there's none better!) the benefit of their Crosby tones, real or imagined! And why not? MGM instead of Paramount? Who knows, perhaps Fred Reynolds or Keith Parkinson would give us their considered views. Certainly MGM have the big name for musicals - and have since produced montages of their great efforts in this field. But, it illustrates another well-known facet of Bing's character. Loyalty - he started with Paramount and stuck with them although he was 'loaned' once or twice, and then did HIGH SOCIETY - for MGM! Similarly, he remained faithful to Decca for recording purposes all the way thro' 20 years. Incidentally, HIGH SOCIETY bids fair to become the most televised film of them all! With ITV holding the rights, of course, it can be shown at different times by the various commercial channels.

STAN AUSTIN, 58 Pear Tree Avenue, Yiewsley, West Drayton, Midd'x:

I imagine most people read the story recently in a national newspaper about the chap laying new floor-covering who first took up the old lino. He found underneath a newspaper dated January 21



1934. This contained a column written by Hannen Swaffer, who had just seen the film GOING HOLLYWOOD. Mr. Swaffer reckoned that this film marked "a serious decline in Bing Crosby". He further decided that Bing would never make it because he was too short; he went on to say that "were there no wireless, Bing would probably be earning £10 a week in one of the better-class road shows".

Hannen Swaffer at that time also worried that the words of the songs in 1934 "were not so hot". Crikey, he should hear today's!

WE'RE NOT DRESSING, therefore, must be the most glorious "decline" in entertainment history!

Editor: Well, I hadn't seen this piece and must assume that other members may not have seen it either. The paper found must have been the now-defunct DAILY HERALD, for Hannen Swaffer, as older readers will know, was a noted columnist in that paper for many, many years. He wasn't much of a talent assessor! Bit of an eccentric, really..... But that intro enables us to mention something in the same vein. The freedom of the press has a hollow ring to it - except for a handful of newspaper proprietors and the writers (good, bad or indifferent) they employ. For example, when a snide book was serialised in one of our so-called national newspapers, I - and I happen to know, scores of others - wrote to that paper asking what they considered the point was in printing this unsubstantiated mud-slinging at a loved and respected entertainer, now dead, and did they realise they were affronting the majority of their readers?

I got a stereotyped reply saying thanks for your letter and letting us know your views. Not a single letter of protest was printed in that paper. Its not difficult to imagine that a junior clerk, perhaps around 17-18 years of age, was given the pile of letters and absent-mindedly told to "send 'em the usual...." That is one aspect of the freedom of the press.

However, thanks to Stan for enlightening us - as members will recall, Stan Austin does a lot of programmes with a lot of Bing content for hospital radio in the Middlesex area. He tells us that Citizens' Band Radio is causing him serious difficulties, preventing him, in fact, from recording his programmes as inane chatter breaks in at unexpected moments. Domestic equipment is very liable to pick up this trivia and is obviously going to be a serious drawback. Stan is always pleased to hear from others engaged in hospital programmes - and Mr. W. H. EWERT, 7 Elfin Drive, Ferndown, Dorset is also very active in producing Crosby programmes for hospitals in the South. There are others - seems to me members busy with these activities might all get together and form a subsidiary club!

THE FEATURE WHEREBY MEMBERS may acquire, or dispose of, their Crosbyana... records, tapes, books, photographs &c; there is no charge for insertions which should be written on a separate sheet of paper to assist in collating/insertion. There IS a nominal charge of £1 for NON-Crosby items. Keep your ads. to within 6 lines. If long lists are involved invite SAE for same. Items are printed in utmost good faith but it is up to members to satisfy themselves they are negotiating a satisfactory deal. We can take no responsibility.

TRADING POST

BING - JUST FOR THE RECORD remains available and because of the slightly unexpected circumstance of overseas members failing to avail themselves of this unique volume, members are welcome to consider a second copy - like CALL ME LUCKY, THE ROAD TO BING CROSBY and other publications, they will soon become as gold-dust! Price is £3.50 post paid - overseas members MUST remit in sterling and all such remittances MUST be made to JOHN JOYCE ICC/ACCOUNT. For members outside the UK prices are:

European: £4.00
Australian: £4.50 surface, £6.50 airmail
USA/Can: £4.00 surface; £6.00 airmail.

For the information of new members this is the complete discography PLUS the A to Z of Bing - an alphabetical listing of Bing's records as well as chronological, complete with musical accompanists &c. It is a special price - and an incredible boon and bargain to all Crosby admirers.

BING ties (£2.00 incl. post & packing) may be obtained from THE BADGE CENTRE, 45 Ropergate, Pontefract, West Yorks. Colours are dark blue OR maroon, with the single silhouette motif designed 2-3 ins. below knot.

A FURTHER SMALL STOCK OF KEN BARNES'S BOOK "THE CROSBY YEARS" has been obtained and is available at £10.00 post paid...from Secretary.

LES SINGLETON, 361 Bushbury Lane, Bushbury, Wolverhampton wants recordings by Joe Barry, Adam Faith, Billy Fury, Eartha Kitt, Antony Newley, Strinalongs...

JACK SOUTHER, 2011 44th Aven., San Francisco, Cal. 94116, USA always wants out-of-print foreign issues - Bing LPS, EPS, singles, commercial cassettes, reel-to-reel. Will buy or trade for current USA or out-of-print issues... interest extends to dance bands, vocalists & personalities. A useful US contact....

Apart from BING - JUST FOR THE RECORD above, the superseded mini-disog useful for marking, notes, &c. remains available at £2.00 post paid; THE LPography (listing more than 1000 Bing LPs) at £2.00 post paid; PHILCO RADIO TIMES (Lionel Pairpoint) at £2.50, and THE ALTERNATE BING CROSBY (an analysis of differing 'takes') by COLIN PUGH, also £2.50 - both post paid. These are available from the Secretary but REMEMBER, see above for BING - JUST FOR THE RECORD: address - JOHN JOYCE (BOOKBINDERS) Saltmeadows, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear, NE8 3AH..For Secretary, see page 5!

JEREMY ROSE, 437 Southway Drive, Southway, Plymouth: FOR SALE - Crosby collection consisting of some 80 LPs., 150 cassettes, etc. Would make excellent 'starter' collection. Will sell as one lot or individual items. SAE for lists please.

MR. J. SHARP, 27 Lacey Dr. Old Coulsdon, Surrey would like to meet/correspond with male members in his area...feels isolated! Phone DOWNLANDS 54943

REV. NEVILLE JARRETT, sale of reel-to-reel 2hr tapes (5³/₄in) Philco Radio Shows, GEC., film soundtracks etc. 50p each - CALLERS ONLY.

To answer several members: we know of no way of getting the book on Bing by DR. MIZE. We feel, further, it is most unlikely it can be obtained. CALL ME LUCKY, thanks to the diligence of some members, has been found in some quantity via book-finders, but that was published here. Dr. Mize wasn't. The only copies are in the hands of such a few collectors that acquisition seems impossible.

BING'S HOLLYWOOD was a Brunswick (Decca) issue of 15 albums, with the special cat. no. BING 1 - 15 and covered Bing's films from 1934 to 1954. Issued 1962/3 they are difficult to obtain now - but watch TRADING POST.

When we say, as we often do, that Bing never recorded the great songs from the Mack Sennett 'shorts' e.g. EVERY TIME MY HEART BEATS, AUF WIEDERSEHEN MY DEAR, LOVABLE, FOR YOU, IN MY HIDEAWAY, MY SILENT LOVE etc. we mean he never went into a studio and commercially recorded them for disc. The records you pick up containing these songs state they are the SOUNDTRACKS from these shorts - wonderfully spruced up, too. One member has asked WHY didn't Bing record them - they were "hits of the day". The reason must be that Bing didn't have a recording contract at the time. He had finished with the Rhyt Boys/Whiteman, finished with the Coconut Grove (Arnheim, Grier) and hadn't started his solo career on records. Furthermore, he was involved with that union dispute as a result of "doings" at the Grove. (The Mack Sennett LOVABLE is, of course, a different song despite the same name from the one Bing recorded with Whiteman in 1928).

KAREN MACKLEN formerly of 2 The Avenue, Taunton, would like her friends to know she has moved to: 53 Scott Close, Taunton, Somerset TA1 6UL phone as before Taunton 84458 How's that!

TERRY RADCLIFFE, 3401 E.40th St. Tulsa, 74135, USA wants: LPS IN MINT CONDITION PLEASE - PENNIES FROM HEAVEN (DL4251) SWINGING ON A STAR (DL8635) HOME ON THE RANGE (DL8210) - Terry gives the American cat. nos. but members can identify UK equivalents. He also asks two questions: When did Jack Kapp quit managing Crosby's records? When he died....and Why was WHITE CHRISTMAS recorded a second time..what was wrong with the first? Nothing - the masters wore out due to the phenomenal demand for pressings.

If anyone DOES have the Dr. Mize book for sale - B. Sandercock 10 Captain Cook Close, Chalfont St. Giles, Bucks reckons he is first in the queue.

*** ANYONE WHO WROTE FOR FOREIGN STAMPS LAST TIME and did NOT get any may write again. There is another accumulation. SAE please.***

MRS. JUNE COATES, 37 Scott Rd., Droylesden, Lancs would appreciate a cassette of Part 14 of the Bing Crosby Story (featuring Ken Barnes/Pete Moore, aired in 1978, if anyone can help please.

NEIL O'BRIEN, 4 Wychbury St., Spreydon, Christchurch 2, New Zealand wishes to swap a copy of HIGH TOR (Festival FGL 12-981) for either a copy of a novel YEAR OF THE TIGER by Martin Fallon (about 1964) or one of the Pobjoy silver medallions or pendants struck after Bing's death.

LES STREET, 8 Wyfan Place, Mynachdy, Cardiff would like to get copies of BING earlier than No. 39; also copies of THE CROSBY COLLECTOR and CROSBY POST.

Aware that some members are likely to be beaver away at their own pet and private projects, DAVID WARD, 51 St. Andrews St., Lincoln, LN5 7UD would be interested to hear from anyone who may be researching/reviewing the CHESTERFIELD shows of Bing? A complete non-commercial discography is the dream of a lot of people, we know. Philco has been 'done' by Lionel Pairpoint, GEC by Bert Bishop, and there are brief directories about of Cremo...the real 'big one' of course, is the Kraft Music Hall ten solid years of singing..... One day....

LEGEND (MUSIC) Legend House, 153 Francklyn Gardens, Edgware, Midd'x

Under the guidance of MIKE SLIPMAN, Legend (Music) imports the more desirable and 'difficult to obtain records in normal record shops' - and merits members' attention. Please note post & packing: 1 LP add 75p, 2 LPs add £1.10, plus 30p each added LP. It is appreciated that absence of titles in this listing is not helpful but space doesn't permit. Many of the albums have been reviewed in KEEPING TRACK, if not in this issue in fairly recent ones. Currently available:

MAGIC AWE3 BING CROSBY & FRIENDS (see KEEPING TRACK this issue) £4.50p
 GRAP 1001 MUSIC, MUSIC, MUSIC (see KEEPING TRACK No. 59) £4.50p
 SPOKANE 18 BING & CONNIE (BOSWELL) 'ON THE AIR' £6.00
 SPOKANE 19 MUSIC HALL HIGHLIGHTS Bing 1940-41 £6.00
 SPOKANE 20 DER BINGLE VOL 3 Bing Crosby (K.T. 60) £6.00
 SPOKANE 21 BING & THE MUSIC MAIDS (see K.T. No. 60) £6.00
 MCA VIM 9521/22 SWEET MEMORIES OF BING (Jap. import) £15.50 (double album)
 RCA NL 42889 YOUNG BING CROSBY (this is the full 12-track version, Whiteman, Arnheim) £2.29p
 PHILLIPS 6641923 SONGS OF A LIFETIME (double) £3.79p
 MCA MCFM 2839 SONGS OF THE ISLANDS £2.99p
 DAN VC 5018 BING ON V-DISC (WARTIME) Jap import £7.20p
 RCA AXM2-5509 BLUE ORCHIDS 2-LP set of DICK TODD (Bing's most faithful 30/40's imitator!) £10.00 INCLUSIVE.
 KOALA 14129 SWING WITH BING £3.50p
 KOALA 14207 YOU KEEP COMING BACK LIKE A SONG £3.50p
 17CA 177 SHILLELAGHS & SHAMROCKS £3.50.

SPECIAL OFFER: BING'S MAGIC £3.00 plus P & P, BUT FREE WITH ANY OTHER TWO ALBUMS. Write with SAE for lists of many other Bing albums plus other contemporary artists.

We had a somewhat agitated letter from MCA asking on which album was STRAIGHT DOWN THE LINE as they couldn't find it in their current listings and urgently required copies of the track. They requested a reverse-charge phone call and I was truly delighted to ring them and tell them (a) the title is STRAIGHT DOWN THE MIDDLE, (b) it doesn't figure in their lists for it belongs to Phillips (Phonogram) - and (c) why don't they answer letters from us regarding no issues of Bing here while other countries are busily engaged on them? They were fairly startled! On their assurance it would reach the right people, I am writing again on the latter subject. They seemed fairly stunned, too, over STRAIGHT DOWN THE MIDDLE! But, doesn't this illustrate in great measure what we have been saying about the big companies being in distinct disarray? Oh, they did tell me a new BEST OF BING is shortly due in the £2.99 range; we can look forward with confidence to a rehash of BLUE OF THE NIGHT, DON'T FENCE ME IN, WHITE CHRISTMAS, MCNAMARA'S BAND, MOONLIGHT BECOMES YOU etc. etc. (sic)

One interpretation of 'freedom of the press' occurs to us - they can print what they like and we are free to read it - or not. But its pretty negative, isn't it?

PICKED UP A book in the library the other day: THE SINGING VOICE by Robert Rushmore, no publishing date. It was devoted 95 per cent to opera and concert singers but I was pleasantly surprised to come across:

"Far and away the most famous of the early pop baritones was Bing Crosby. This was partly due to the many movies he made but also because of his unique voice, round, mellifluous, having a special quality of its own which is not always the case in the pop world where second-rate vocalists can, and do sound alike....."



We liked this story, and we think you will. Nothing special; it could apply to thousands, even millions of people. Modest, self-deprecating yet putting over what Bing Crosby means to so many of us. It appeared on May 3 this year in the SUNDAY NEWS 'Ulster's only Sunday paper'. The subject is Johnny Jones, the same JJ in John Marshall's ballad...

1977 Saw the death of Bing Crosby...but altho' the Old Groaner is no longer with us, his special sound is being kept alive by countless fans around the world. COLIN McALPIN has been finding out....

WHY CROSBY'S MAGIC WILL NEVER DIE

Today they'll be unveiling a statue in the American town of Spokane....and once again the world will be reminded of the man whose singing changed the course of popular music.

He called himself, self-deprecatingly, the Old Groaner, but when Harry Lillis 'Bing' Crosby worked his magic on a song it was like taking a relaxing bath in warm water. When the man whose career spanned fifty golden years - during which time he made something like 2,400 commercial recordings, sang about 5,000 songs, made 57 movies and won an Academy Award for his portrayal of a priest in 'Going My Way' - stepped to a microphone his unhurried sound swept around you like a comforting blanket on a cold night. There was no other singer quite like Bing.

Bing Crosby died on October 14, 1977, at the age of 73, suddenly and without warning as he walked with friends off a golf course near Madrid, Spain. It was typical of the man at the time of his death he was planning to team up once again with Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour for what would have been their eighth 'Road' picture: 'The Road to the Fountain of Youth'.

Just a few days before his death, Crosby had packed the London Palladium in a show marking his 50th year in the entertainment business...and though he once remarked that he'd never have a hit again, he added: "I'll keep on singing as long as there's a market, and as long as the voice doesn't alter much. I'd just like to do a job now and then and keep in touch with the industry. Its been my life for 50 years. Its been a long, long, pull and I've had great results. I can't complain if it stops tomorrow." It stopped only in the sense that the world's first crooner is no longer around in person to warm his fans with that liquid, brown voice...but Bing will always be around.

Especially for fans like the dedicated Johnny Jones of Ballyhalbert, Co. Down, whose walls are covered in mementoes of Bing Crosby....a stunning museum to a man whose style paved the way for singers like Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett, Perry Como and Andy Williams.

HIS SOUND CAPTURED TWO
GENERATIONS



If, as Crosby said, he 'groaned' it was a sound that captured two full generations, a sound the others tried, with little success, to imitate. There was only one Bing, only one Crosby style.

He was born into a family of seven in Tacoma, Washington, in 1904 and worked with bands while still a student at Gonzaga University. His family later moved to Spokane, where today the citizens will reveal that statue.

Crosby was a very private man, he had a supreme sense of the fitness of things. His marriage to Dixie Lee, for 22 years, lasted until her death in 1952 from cancer. Five years later he married actress Kathryn Grant, 29 years younger than himself.

And all the time he kept working on that casual style: "I want to sing conversationally, to reach people with meaning.

"I don't think of a song in terms of notes. I try to think of what it purports to say lyrically. That way it sounds more natural, and anything natural is more listenable."

It was the voice, noted "THE TIMES", heard more often by more people than that of any mortal in history. Bing's reply to that sort of praise, however deserved it was, was to be found in the title of his autobiography: "CALL ME LUCKY".

"I've followed his career since I was 14," explains Johnny, who is now 59, "Bing just appealed to me. I was fond of music and his style said something to me. As I got older, I got more and more interested.

"I'd class my collection of Crosby relics, books, records, etc. as good....I could name you many people, here in Northern Ireland even, who have much more and who know much more than me about Bing. But to be honest, nobody will ever have a complete collection of Crosbyana, there's just so much of it.

"Even Bing himself didn't remember all the songs he'd done. Indeed, he'd often write to a collector in England, Bob Roberts, and ask if he, Bing, had ever recorded such-and-such a song."

Johnny, a Welshman who has lived in Northern Ireland since 1960, is a member of several Crosby clubs....The International Crosby Circle, The Bingang of America, The Bing Crosby Historical Society of Tacoma, The Victoria Bing Crosby Society (Australia). And all the members keep in regular touch.

"We're all dedicated to the memory of Bing," says Johnny, who keeps in touch with a host of friends around the world by tape, "and we all help one another with our collections. A lot has been gathered through the medium of the various societies and we are always willing to help a fellow member add to his collection."

Among the other local Bing fans are Barry Adams, Noel Mould, Jim Lemon and Ray McCormack of Belfast, and Jack Dougan of Hollywood. All with their own personal collections of Crosby relics.

Johnny has so many stories of Bing, like the time he met him in London in 1976.

"Along with a few of his fans, I was waiting outside the Palladium in the hope of seeing him. We were waiting at the stage entrance when a car drove up and Bing got out. On his way to the theatre he waved to us and since we all knew how reserved he was we considered that enough, we'd got to see him. But shortly after, he came back out and joined us for a longer chat...I wonder how many

big stars would take that sort of trouble for a handful of fans outside a theatre?"

And there's another story surrounding the song WHITE CHRISTMAS - the biggest-selling single of all time - and its follow-up, SILENT NIGHT....Bing didn't want to make SILENT NIGHT because he didn't want to make money out of the church - he was a devout Catholic - but when he was told the royalties from the recording would go to a boys' mission in China, he agreed.

"I like other singers, too," says Johnny fairly, "but the thing about a Crosby song was that you could sing it yourself afterwards ...it is simple, but it was always good."

It was a sad truth contained in the last song of his last album: "There are so many songs in me that won't be sung...."

Johnny Jones did even better, we feel, when, as a follow-up to the story above, he appeared on Downtown Radio to talk to an interviewer about Crosbyana.

As you can see, the last two pages of this issue resume the GEC radio programmes. They can be detached and added to those you already have.

MICHAEL KENEFTICK, 4 Friar-Street, Youghal, Co. Cork, Ireland has a lot of Bing cuttings &c. which he would exchange for similar of Michael Holliday. All correspondence answered.

We're obliged to the several members who sent us the cutting from the BIRMINGHAM EVENING MAIL giving the news that Mrs. Rainbow was disposing of a huge collection of Crosby records. We recall this lady being quoted in previous paper stories as "not interested in Crosby clubs." She didn't want to know what Bing had for breakfast. Pity. We see her point of view - we're not particularly interested, either.

PHIL CLARKE, leader of the SOUTHERN BING CROSBY SOCIETY, has MOVED from Walden Rd. to: 150 HART PLAIN AVEN. COWPLAIN, HANTS, PO8 8QP. Apart from running this highly social branch, Phil is the video expert to whom those of a like interest should communicate.

G.R.T.(Tom)EVANS, 84 Brereton Rd., New Invention, Willenhall, Staffs, ably abetted by DON SMALL, One Lea View, also of Willenhall who keeps splendid accounts &c. organises Midlands members with dances and meetings. All members interested should get in touch with either Tom or Don....while DAVID WARD, 51 St. Andrews St. Lincoln, LN5 7UD would like to organise members in the EAST Midlands. We see his point: the Midlands is a term that covers a really huge area and travelling from, say, Lincoln its no mean distance. The area David has in mind is Lincolnshire, S. Humberside, Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Nottingham &c. Anyone willing to co-operate should write to David....Jim Newell, 17 Edwina Close, Bitterne, Southampton, invites members in that town to his Southampton Bing club... JOHN JOYCE, 21 Birchfield Gardens, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear organises social functions in the North-East... The columns of BING are freely available to all these regional enterprises if a representative will send in regular reports &c.